“It’s 5 o’clock in the morning and you’re just on fire”: Exploring embodied experiences in competitive swimming

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Abstract

In recent years sporting embodiment has attracted an increasing level of academic attention, including a burgeoning sociological corpus that draws influence from the existential phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. This combination of phenomenology and sociology provides a powerful framework from which to examine sporting embodiment, and challenges many taken-for granted assumptions and presuppositions regarding the often underexplored, undertheorized 'mundane' elements of our sporting experience.

Swimming is one physical culture where embodied experiences have been shown to be core elements of recreational or leisure swimming. Studies that examine the embodied experiences of competitive swimming, however, remain sparse, and tend to be limited to critical sociological examinations of gendered relationships or training regimes, which often overlook the intense embodied experiences of training and competing. Utilising ethnographic methods of participant observation, conducted across three, five-week immersions, and 19 individual and three group interviews with senior performance swimmers, this study develops a richer and deeper understanding of the competitive swimming lifeworld and how a swimmer's embodied experiences contribute fundamentally to the construction of this lifeworld.

The study aims were achieved by addressing five key themes generated from the data. The first, 'Becoming and Remaining', focuses on the swimmers' motivations for entering and remaining within the aquatic lifeworld. The second, 'Doing Competitive Swimming', presents the different ways in which the swimming body is central to the 'doing' of competitive swimming. The third, 'The Shifted Swimming Sensorium' describes the variety of sensory experiences that make up the swimmers' sensory stock of knowledge. The fourth, 'Discomfort, Pain and Enduring' examines the various painful experiences within the swimming lifeworld and how swimmers come to understand and endure these. The fifth and final theme, 'The Intersubjective and Intercorporeal Competitive Swimming Lifeworld', challenges the notion of swimming as an individual sport highlighting the shared and intercorporeal moments that emphasis the social nature of competitive swimming.

Acknowledgements

Although it is my name that appears below the title of this thesis, it would be remiss of me to claim that it was all my own doing. This PhD has been a journey, and like all good journeys it involved other people, many of whom will not have realised that they played any part at all. There are, however, a few people who have played a significant role in helping me get to this point, and I would like to use this space to give them my sincerest thanks in turning this journey in to a reality.

To begin, I would like to thank Jaqui and Adam for your unwavering support. The faith you have shown in me, and your guidance and encouragement have meant a lot, especially on the days when I felt like a square peg trying to fit in a round hole. I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to work with both of you and I hope we can continue to do so in the future. I'd also like to extend the thanks given to Adam to his family, Phillipa and Freyja, for welcoming me into your home during my stay in Copenhagen and reminding me there was more to life than a PhD, especially when it involved laundry basket fairground rides.

I now turn to those whose roles are maybe less formal but no less important. In particular, I would like to thank my friends, and fellow PhD travellers. I won't name names for the fear of leaving someone out but please understand that you have all helped in some way. Be that in terms of advice, ideas, or providing a welcome distraction.

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And finally, I would like to extend a sincere debt of gratitude to the swimmers, coaches and others who allowed me access to their lifeworld. Without you, and your generous giving of time this project would not have been possible. I just hope I have done your stories justice.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction – 'Dipping a Toe in to Check the Water Temperature'

> *The swimmer is a complex neural and sensory being, unnaturally attempting to perform efficiently at speed within the laws of mathematics and physics in a foreign substance of high viscosity (Bill Sweetenham, Former Head Coach to Australian and British Swimming).*

In essence, the purpose of this doctoral research project is to unpick the opening line of the above quote by examining the embodied experiences of competitive swimmers, and how these experiences function together in the production of the competitive swimming body. But to me it is much more than that. It's the culmination of not just three years' work but is a story etched into my very being. I have been a swimmer, a swimming coach, and still to this day remain very much emplaced in the competitive swimming lifeworld through friends and family. This project is thus not just a project to me, it's much more than that. It's a part of who I am. I am therefore pleased to be able to share this project with you, starting with more about who I am and the sport of swimming, before setting the stage as to why this project is needed, and describing the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Why the Swimming Lifeworld: Personal Interest

The sport of swimming has been a part of my own personal lifeworld for as long as I can remember. I have been lucky enough to travel to many destinations around the world including several within Europe as well as further flung places such as Japan, America, and Australia competing in national and international events, as well as coaching a wide range of athletes from those just beginning their respective swimming careers, to those competing at the highest levels in European, Commonwealth, World and Olympic events. Along this journey I met and made friends with people I normally wouldn't have had the opportunity to interact with, and I firmly believe that the lessons I learnt about myself as an athlete and coach during this time helped shape me into who I am today. My relationship with swimming was not always positive, however. My mum still tells tales of how I would sit on the side of the pool as a beginner and cry as I did not want to get in. Fast forward a few years to some uninspiring coaches and I found myself on the cusp of walking away from the sport; a position that wasn't helped by my rival love and desire to become a football goalkeeper. A change of club, however, provided a refreshed energy and relationship with swimming that paved the way for me eventually getting into swimming

coaching, and subsequently taking up a role as a full-time coach for the best part of a decade. Throughout these times, both good and bad, I was regularly puzzled, intrigued and quite often frustrated and challenged by certain elements of the sport, always wanting to learn more, but not often getting the opportunities to do so. It is this challenge that ultimately led me to this study, intrigued by the prospect of reading and thinking about swimming, and talking to others about their lived experiences of swimming to see how those experiences chimed with or differed from mine. I was particularly interested in how it *feels* to be a competitive swimmer and to engage with the often gruelling and physically punishing training schedule. It is these experiences that this project represents. This is the story that it tells.

Having been a swimmer and a swimming coach, I am 'vulgarly competent' (Garfinkel, 2002, p. 175) with the competitive swimming lifeworld. For those, however, who are not versed in its intricacies the remainder of this chapter provides a brief introduction into this specific aquatic lifeworld, before outlining why a study of this nature, which specifically investigates the *lived, embodied* experiences of competitive swimming is needed. In doing so, this chapter draws inspiration from the swimmers themselves, who before each training session would often dip their toes, or a hand, into the water to check its temperature; a significant gesture that I emulate by dipping my own toe into the academic waters of competitive swimming.

1.2 Swimming as a Sport: A brief Introduction

The emergence of swimming as a formalised competitive sport occurred during the early 20th century with frontcrawl, breaststroke and backstroke events being held during swimming competitions. Butterfly then emerged during the 1930s and was subsequently recognised as the fourth official swimming stroke during the 1950s. Arguably, however, the biggest factor in the development of swimming as a global competitive sport was the formation of the modern Olympic Games in 1896 where there were four swimming events. At the Rio Olympiad in 2016 there were 16 pool events for both men and women (see Table 1.1) plus a 10km open water event. This is to grow at the 2020 Tokyo Games, as the 800m and 1500m freestyle events are to be added to the men's and women's programmes respectively, and a new mixed medley relay event, in which two men and two women

compete on the same team will be included for the first time. These events, plus the 50m backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly and mixed 4x100m and 4x200m freestyle relays already occur at other international meets such as the World Championships, the European Championships, and the Commonwealth Games. All such events take place under the rules and regulations of the international governing body of competitive swimming, the Fédération International de Natation Amateur (FINA) founded in London in 1908.

Today, there are more than 80,000 registered competitive swimmers (category 2 members) across Great Britain (England, Scotland, Wales) representing approximately 1,500 swimming clubs. Swimmers registered in this category have the opportunity to swim competitively at local, county, regional, national, and international levels including able-bodied, para, and master's events.

Table 1.1 Pool swimming events at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games

Men's Events	**Women's Events**
50, 100, 200, 400, 1500m Freestyle	50, 100, 200, 400, 800m Freestyle
100, 200m Backstroke	100, 200m Backstroke
100, 200m Breaststroke	100, 200m Breaststroke
100, 200m Butterfly	100, 200m Butterfly
200, 400m Individual Medley	200, 400m Individual Medley
4x100m Medley Relay	4x100m Medley Relay
4x100, 4x200m Freestyle Relays	4x100, 4x200m Freestyle Relays

The training involved at these levels can vary greatly with some swimmers completing a couple of sessions per week, while others train twice daily, covering anywhere from 25km to over 100km in the pool each week, for around 48 weeks of the year. This volume of work is widely accepted within swimming as the norm, with this intense training regime often being adopted early in a swimmer's career, usually during adolescence. In addition to this volume of pool training, as a swimmer progresses through his/her teens s/he will often begin to supplement the pool work with land-based activities such as circuits, weight-training, yoga, Pilates, 'Spin' classes, and gymnastics. The time and energy commitment required, together with the intensity of training, makes competitive swimming an

interesting physical-cultural lifeworld to study, but one that remains sociologically under-explored. In the following section I provide a brief overview of a selection of the recent academic literature in swimming in order to frame the rationale of this study. I then provide a detailed review of this literature in section 2.5.

1.3 Swimming in Academia

Given swimming's history as a competitive sport and the prevalence within sports science of more positivist, quantitative research perspectives, it is not surprising to find a significant amount of literature dedicated to improving swimming performance (e.g. Jones, Pyne, Haff, & Newton, 2018; Kilding, Brown, & McConnell, 2010; Maglischo, 2003; Nicol, Ball, & Tor, 2019). Swimming is, however, a sport/physical culture where embodied experiences have also been shown to be core elements of participation (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2011; Evans & Allen-Collinson, 2016; Evans, Allen-Collinson, & Williams, 2017; Evans & Sleap, 2012, 2015; Scott, 2010). In the subjective experiences recounted in these studies, the sensory, lived elements of embodied experiences have come to the fore including experiences of temperature, touch, and pressure including the 'feel' of the water, and experiences of traversing liminal areas around the pool (such experiences are explored further in section 2.7).

Although these studies have helped to illuminate some of the embodied experiences associated with aquatic physical activity, the majority of these studies engaged with recreational aquatic physical activity, and studies that examine the embodied experiences, particularly experiences of 'intense embodiment' (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015; Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015) in competitive swimming remain sparse. Those that do exist tend to be limited to critical sociological examinations of gendered relationships or training regimes, often drawing inspiration from the work of Michel Foucault (e.g. Lang, 2010; McMahon & Barker-Ruchti, 2017; McMahon & Dinan-Thompson, 2011; McMahon & Penney, 2013a, 2013b; McMahon, Penney, & Dinan-Thompson, 2012: see section 2.5 for detailed critique).

Whilst helpful in illuminating the complexities of swimming as a sport and physical culture, and acknowledging the body's role in swimming, these studies tend, however, to reflect

the dominant position within sociological studies in reporting what is done *to* the body by various social forces and power relations. This can result in a somewhat disembodied position that ignores the fleshy, intercorporeal nature of (sporting) bodies. This ethnographic study therefore engages with the body from a different perspective, one that illuminates a *from* the body view, a more embodied or 'carnal sociological' view (Crossley, 1995b), taking into account experiences of 'intense embodiment' (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015; Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015). This particular approach spotlights the importance of embodied practical knowledge and sketches an alternative conception of the human 'social animal', not just as a wielder of symbols, but as a "sensate, suffering, skilled, sedimented and situated creature of flesh and blood" (Wacquant, 2015, p. 1).

To my knowledge, there exists currently only one similar ethnographic account that has ventured into swimming contexts. In it, Karen Throsby (2013, 2015, 2016) focused on recreational, long distance, open water or 'marathon' swimming as opposed to competitive pool swimming. I connect with this work further in Chapters 2-7 but here I focus briefly on the parallels with, and differences from, Throsby's work and this thesis.

Throsby's (2013, 2015, 2016) contributions explore the construction of the marathon swimming body, including the various body and reflexive body techniques required to become a member of the marathon swimming lifeworld, and the associated autotelic pleasures associated with immersion in this particular physical culture. She illuminates how training for marathon swimming changes how the body feels and responds to water, and how marathon swimming provides participants with feelings of 'flow' or 'being in the zone', creating a sense of oneness with the water. She explores the 'shifted sensorium' of marathon swimming, and highlights how thermoception and thermoregulation in particular, play an important role in shaping the marathon-swimming body. Throsby (2013, p. 17) recalls the:

> …texture and movement of the water; biting hail stones; rolling fog; glistening sunshine; the taste of salt water; the warm sun on my shoulders; the angry honk of a territorial goose; the underwater chink of pebbles being pulled across the sea floor.

These all contribute to a state of pleasurable swimming that Throsby notes, in drawing from Straughan (2012, p. 26), is "environmentally specific, produced in concert with water and the properties of this element [water]". Throsby (2016) also considered the range of painful experiences to which the marathon swimming body is subjected and how marathon swimmers come to understand these experiences as either helpful or a hinderance. Consequently, Throsby (2013, 2016) illustrates how a swimmer learns to feel "at home" in an aquatic environment, not because of the outcome of intellectualised technical mastery or overcoming of challenges (fear, sickness, finishing), but as an example of cultivated "corporeal knowing" (Lewis, 2000, p. 71). Hence, the body is the subject of knowledge, rather than the object (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). It is with this cultivated 'corporeal knowing' that the current study also engages; however, it is the need to understand the way that this knowing is achieved that is the principal point of departure between my research and Throsby's. Throsby (2016) makes only fleeting references to phenomenological thinking in her work. Conversely, this study engages specifically with sociological-phenomenology, drawing particularly from the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in order to highlight the lived through, dynamic, sensory, and intercorporeal nature of the competitive swimming lifeworld. To achieve this goal, the following general aims were set for this study, and commensurate with the phenomenological and ethnographic approach these were 'open' and general:

1. to develop an in-depth understanding of the competitive swimming lifeworld from the embodied perspective of the swimmers, within a specific ethnographic site;
2. to examine the role of the senses and the sensorium in the competitive swimming lifeworld;
3. To investigate the normalisation of various painful experiences and the notion of endurance in competitive swimming; and
4. to examine the nature of swimming as an individual sport.

As a result, this thesis offers both an insight into the competitive swimming lifeworld from the perspective of the swimmers' own lived, embodied experiences, and also contributes to a growing body of literature that seeks to explore the potential of empirical forms of phenomenology in understanding sporting embodiment and the lived experiences of sporting practitioners. The next section outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The intention of this thesis is to take the reader on a journey that is, in some respects, similar to the journey that a swimmer would take during a swimming training session. Such a training session is often made up of distinct elements (e.g. Diving In, The Warm Up and Prep Set, The Main Set and The Swim Down) that combine to make a coherent whole, and which are often aligned to a specific training goal set by the coach.

A 'good' training session for swimmers and coaches often progresses smoothly from one element to another, where the warm-up and preparation set(s) progressively prepare the swimmer physiologically and psychologically for the main set(s) that follow. When piecing together this thesis structure I tried to map its more orthodox chapters on to the relevant elements from a swimming training session to help structure the writing. Thus, Chapters 2 and 3 are designed to engage the reader in the project and provide a platform in which the main theoretical and methodological perspectives employed in this session are outlined. The reader should then be able to effectively engage with the five rounds of the 'Main Set' in Chapters 4-8.

Chapter 2, 'Diving In' (the literature review) opens with a focus on the sociology of the body noting how much of 'classical' sociology's concern with the body has tended to be more implicit than explicit, accompanied by abstract theorising about the body that has often overlooked or underplayed the biological, material, and sentient body constructing it as an 'absent presence' (Shilling, 2012). To address this, authors therefore started to pay attention to the corporeal body and embodiement with some championing the use of phenomenology as one means of combating the sometimes arid, overtheroetical analyses of the body. Therefore, Chapter 2 gives an overview of phenomenology and sociological-phenomenology, as well as detailing some other phenomenologically inspired analyses pertinent to this study. In closing, the chapter provides a critique of extant research in relation to the main themes and concepts addressed in this thesis including becoming, doing, the senses, pain and enduring, and intersubjectivity and intercorporeality.

In Chapter 3, 'The Warm up and Prep-Set' (or, more conventionally, the methodology), my methodological approach is outlined. It opens by providing the philosophical assumptions

underpinning this study, and how phenomenology offers 'another way' to conduct research distinct from the traditional positivist and interpretivist paradigms. I outline how phenomenology emphasises the link between mind and body, rejecting the ontological and epistemological extremes of subjectivism and objectivism. Phenomenology as a method is then discussed, with a specific focus on four key elements: intentionality, epochē, description, and essence as outlined by Giorgi's (1989, 2009) phenomenological method. I also show how Giorgi's method was adapted and applied in this project. Subsequent sections then outline how I engaged with the principle of epochē and how access to the field and my role were negotiated. The various methods of data collection are then described, before outlining the process of leaving the field. I then portray how the data were analysed, represented, and evaluated. The final section of this chapter (The Prep Set) describes the space and place of the fieldsite: ANP Swimming.

The next five chapters, 'The Main Set' (or, more conventionally, the results and discussion) delve into the findings of the study. The first chapter of the analysis, Chapter 4, 'Becoming and Remaining', discusses the swimmers' journeys into and through swimming prior to arriving at ANP Swimming, mapping some of the opportunities and challenges they faced, as well as describing some of the motivations for their continued participation in the sport. Chapter 5, 'Doing – The Skilled Practice of Swimming', outlines some of the body and reflexive body techniques that play a key part in the swimmers' ability to inhabit the competitive swimming lifeworld, and how the acquisition of these body techniques and skilled behaviours is not achieved simply through the repetitive rehearsal of coherent movements over time, but is a much more complex, cyclical phenomenon that demands practical experimentation, discovery and the ability to constantly adjust and adapt based on changes in the environment or the swimmer's own corporeality. Chapter 6, 'The Shifted Sensorium of Competitive Swimming', explores the sensory transformations and information that facilitate and arise from 'Doing', with specific emphasis on the haptic dimension, both cutaneous and somatic, and how haptic input is linked to the visual. In the final sections, I direct analytic attention to the relatively underexplored notion of durée or inner time (Schütz, 1967) within the sociology of sport.

In Chapter 7, 'Discomfort, Pain and Enduring', I extend the sensory discussion towards pain - both good and bad - and how a swimmer negotiates their relationship with these sensations. I highlight how, in some instances, swimmers actively and positively utilise both good and bad pain as a learning experience, as a marker of success, or as a means to assess a perceived need to change technique to avoid injury. The final part of Chapter 7 looks at how the swimmers come to endure levels of discomfort and pain that would in other walks of life would be deemed excessive. Endurance is also framed as not only cognitive and somatic, but as forming a key component in a swimmer's 'stock of knowledge' that could be shared intersubjectively, and allows the swimmers to continue to construct, participate in, and make sense of the *social* lifeworld of competitive swimming. Chapter 8, 'The Intersubjectivity and Intercorporeal Competitive Swimming Lifeworld', extends the discussion in Chapter 7 towards the examination of the intersubjective and intercorporeal nature of competitive swimming by showing how the embodied experiences detailed in the previous three chapters are also intersubjective and intercorporeal. In doing so, Chapter 8 challenges the notion of competitive swimming as a purely individual sport, instead painting a picture of a deeply and fundamentally shared phenomenon, in which there exists a collective resonance between lifeworld members.

Chapter 9, 'The Swim Down' (or, more conventionally, the Conclusion), offers summative points about the embodied experiences outlined in Chapters 4 through 8. I also suggest how these findings contribute fresh perspectives and findings to current knowledge. I then provide some final thoughts in regard to my chosen theory, methodology and methods, and suggest some study limitations and possible avenues for future research. I also attempt to re-address the 'so what?' question and make suggestions about why this research is merited. Finally, I offer some personal reflections about the project as a whole and my researcher journey. Having outlined the study structure, I now 'dive-in' to the review of literature, introducing the various sociological perspectives and phenomenological tenets that underpin this study

Chapter 2: Review of Literature – 'Diving In'

2.1 Introduction

Much like 'diving in' to the water at the start of a swimming training session, the purpose of this literature review is to enter into the academic discussions in which this study is set. To achieve this, I will examine current scholarship relevant to the study of the body, embodiment and lived experience within sport and physical cultures. I introduce and describe some key sociological and phenomenological concepts to the reader, as well as presenting some key literature that highlights the strength of these two perspectives in addressing the research aims outlined in Chapter 1.

To begin with this literature review explores the sociology of the body. Clearly the body, and embodiment are important themes for this thesis so mapping their history within sociological literature more generally and the sociology of sport specifically seems vital. Consideration is then given to the development of the body from a position of 'absent presence' in much of classical sociology (Shilling, 1993), to its more prominent role in recent sociological discourse.

Following this, phenomenology as a philosophy will then be discussed charting its development from the work of Edmund Husserl, paying particular attention to the existential phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the social or sociological-phenomenology of Alfred Schütz, as well as some other phenomenologically inspired analyses and their relevance to the present study. Finally, phenomenology's application to research in sport and physical cultures will be highlighted with a specific focus on research pertaining to becoming and doing, the senses, pain and enduring, and intersubjectivity and intercorporeality.

2.2 The Sociology of the Body

The separation of mind from body was a consistent theme in Western thought dating back to Plato (428-348 BCE) and exemplified *par excellence* in Descartes' famous '*Cogito ergo sum* – I think, therefore I am' (1971). Historically, this dualistic approach unnecessarily limited how the question of human embodiment was approached within sociology,

according to Williams and Bendelow (1998). In the early 1980s, Turner (1984) noted how sociology rarely explicitly analysed "an obvious and prominent fact about human beings: they have bodies and they are bodies" (Turner, 1984, p. 1). Almost ten years later Chris Shilling echoed this point claiming that, "the body has traditionally been something of an absent presence in the discipline (sociology)" (Shilling, 1993, p. 11), where much theorising about the body was abstract and ignored the biological and sentient body. As Wainwright and Turner note, the sociology of the body of this time:

> …is characterised by an abundance of theorising, but a systematic empirical research tradition is lacking (Turner, 1996). Research on the body has been chastised for privileging theorising, of bracketing out the individual, and for ignoring the practical experiences of embodiment (Watson,2000), (Wainwright & Turner, 2006, p. 238).

This dualistic position led certain authors including Williams and Bendelow (1998, p. 1) to rather contentiously note that classical sociology "neglected the body as an explicit theme in the analysis of social order, social change and social (inter)action". Such a position, however, is open to challenge, as classical sociologists such as Marx (1954), Simmel (1990), Weber (1948, 1985) and Durkheim (1995), for example, all deal with selective aspects of human embodiment. Marx shows how the development of capitalist technology linked and subordinated the working-class body to machinery; Simmel notes how technology has enabled us to transcend the parameters of our sensory being; Weber writes on the rationalisation of the body within bureaucracy and modernity; and Durkheim provides a theory of how elementary bodily processes underpin the constitution of moral order. Classical sociology was therefore rarely entirely disembodied. Rather, the discipline's concern with the body was perhaps more implicit than explicit and tended to focus selectively on aspects of human embodiment, leaving the mind/body relationship in the realm of philosophy, concentrating instead on other conceptual dichotomies such as the structure/agency and subject/object dilemmas (Shilling, 2012).

Over the last four decades this 'absent body' position has been challenged. The body has gradually come to be seen as a subject that can shed new light onto traditional sociological concerns such as the structure/agency and macro/micro divisions (Shilling, 2012). Texts such as Turner's (1996) *The Body and Society* alongside other notable contributions by

Featherstone, Hepworth, and Turner (1991), Scott and Morgan (1993), Shilling (1993) and the journal *Body & Society* [1995-], for example, have helped shape the sociology of the body into one of the most prominent fields of contemporary sociology (Malcolm, 2012). As Turner (2012, p. 1) states, this rising interest in the body "is an intellectual response to fundamental changes in contemporary relationships between bodies, technology and society". Shilling (2007, p. 9) discusses six of these fundamental changes including how: a) for theorists of consumer culture the body became a significantly malleable marker of identity and status, subject to the vagaries of fashion; b) for body therapists and ecologists the body became a vehicle for the cultivation of particular lived experiences and relationships with the external environment; c) with the rise of second wave feminism, the body became a sexed/gendered object used to justify and reproduce women's subjugation; d) Foucauldian analysts treated the body as an object rendered passive by changing modes of control; e) technological advances and the resultant development of the cyborg body changed the body into an uncertain, and even rapidly disappearing remnant of pre-technological culture, and finally; f) the body became a positive conceptual category for those concerned with addressing theoretical problems within the discipline.

The body, and the notion of embodiment that deconstructed the prevalent mind/body divide and allowed for an understanding of the body not simply as a source of experience and activity, but as a source of knowledge and agency in itself (Pink, 2009b), now receive considerable explicit attention within the social sciences and humanities (Pink, 2011; Shilling, 2012). This resultant proliferation of writings on, and about, the body have approached the subject from a variety of viewpoints and different fields. To give some examples, Goffman's (1983) analysis of the interaction order, and Foucault's (1979) disciplinary systems, placed the body at the core of their respective analyses and exerted considerable influence on contemporary analyses of the body as a socially constructed phenomenon. Turner (1984), drawing from Foucault, Parsons, and Hobbs, explored how societies focus on the control and management of the body. Elias's (2000) civilised body concept also focuses on the body as something that could be managed or controlled, through training and 'civilising' the body.

Nonetheless, this increase in academic attention toward the body has not been without its challenges. On the one hand, it is suggested that for the first time the role of the body is being taken seriously in sociological discourse (Williams & Bendelow, 1998, p. 1). On the other hand, the body is now one of the most hotly contested areas in the social sciences (Howson & Inglis, 2001), with the resultant breadth and depth of studies giving rise to numerous attempts at defining and classifying the body, and as Synnott notes in regard to the social nature of the body:

> …the body social is many things: the symbol of self, but also of society; it is something that we have, yet also what we are; it is both subject and object at the same time; it is individual…as unique as a fingerprint…yet it is also common to all humanity…[It] is both individual creation, physically and phenomenologically, and a cultural product; it is personal, and also property (Synnott, 1993, p. 4).

Providing a specific, concrete definition of the body therefore remains elusive. Additionally, the focal point of many of these studies was "*what is done to the body"* (Crossley, 1995b, p. 43, emphasis in original) by various social forces and power relations (Shilling, 2001). As Crossley (1995b, p. 43) notes, this position has the "potential to externalise the 'doing' agent (e.g. self, society, symbolic order) from the body, to reify that agent and thus position the body within an array of unhelpful dualisms." Consequently, these studies never fully overcome the deficiencies of classical sociology and are often seen as, "*reproducing in a different form* the dual approach sociology adopted towards the body" (Shilling, 2012, p. 14, emphasis in original).

The Cartesian distinction of the body as material object, and mind as a thinking subject (see Crossley, 1995b), has been used to inform understandings of human experience in ways that distinguished between the 'flow' of everyday life experience, and the rational knowledge through which it was understood (Pink, 2011). This resulted in an understanding of the body that does not view the body as a ground for developing understanding, or being relevant to how sociological knowledge is constituted (Howson & Inglis, 2001). Consequently, the body is seen by some as "both everywhere and nowhere...where bodies are radically reconfigured as fluid, multiple, fragmented and dispersed" (Williams & Bendelow, 1998, pp. 1-2). As Turner (1984, p. 8) concludes the body may appear to be solid, yet it is "the most elusive, illusory…metaphorical…and ever distant thing", while Butler

(1993, p. ix) notes how in "trying to consider the materiality of the body", she "kept losing track of the subject". This has the effect of making the body, as Loy (1991, p. 119) notes, appear "missing in action".

It therefore becomes necessary to move towards a conceptual framework that allows us to transcend this dichotomous understanding of human existence. As a result, more recent analytical attention has been paid to embodiment as the experienced and lived-through source of self and society (Burkitt, 1998; Crossley, 2001c; Shilling, 2003), affording researchers a means of accessing and introducing to analysis the lived experience of the body without reducing it to either the realm of materialism or to that of representation. This move towards embodiment has allowed knowledge to be recognised as not simply something of the mind, but that 'knowing' is embedded in embodied action (Pink, 2011), in "bodily knowing and sense-making as well as cognitive knowledge" (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 293). For sociologists, the notion of embodiment has facilitated a shift in focus from social structures and/or interactions, towards the recognition of other factors including materiality and biological processes, alongside social-structural analyses (e.g. Allen-Collinson, 2011a). As Shilling argues:

> To begin to achieve an adequate analysis of the body we need to regard it as a material, physical and biological phenomenon which is irreducible to immediate social processes or classifications. Furthermore, our senses, knowledge-ability and capability to act are integrally related to the fact that we are embodied beings (Shilling, 2003, p. 10).

Shilling thus moves away from perspectives that see the social as ultimately defining bodies and instead stresses that "social relations may take up and transform our embodied capacities in all manner of ways, but they still have a basis in human bodies" (Shilling, 2003, p. 12). A focus on embodiment thus becomes a focus on a way of being in the world; a focus on embodied selves.

This 'in-between' or 'third way' of conceptualising the body, also captured in the term 'body-subject', denotes the body as neither pure subject nor pure object but that which lies between these notions (Crossley, 2005a, p. 11). Grosz (1994) likens this body to the Möbius strip, a three-dimension figure of eight (see Figure 2.1), where there is no clear

distinction between inside and outside and, instead demonstrates a unity in which there is an inflection of mind into body and body into mind. Embodiment can thus be conceptualised as a fluid process of continual flux or reversibility between subject and object.

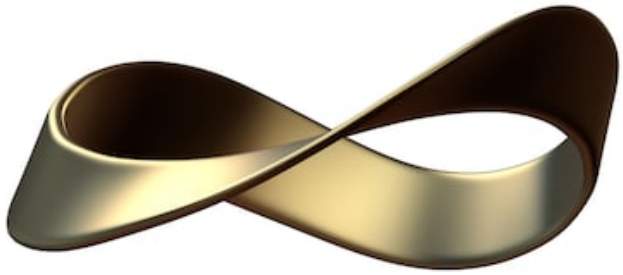

Figure 2.1: The Möbius strip (Shutterstock, 2019)

This does not mean that exploring and mapping cultural and subcultural constructions of the body and inscriptions of discourse are now unimportant areas of research, but rather that sociology (and the sociology of sport) must also address the need to (re-)engage with the lived experiences and materiality of the body (Burns, 2003). The argument here is not just for a sociology *of* the body, rather that sociology should itself be fundamentally *embodied* i.e. theorising not so much about bodies but *from* bodies as *lived* entities, including those of its practitioners as well as its subjects (Williams & Bendelow, 1998, p. 209) – a more embodied or 'carnal sociology' (Crossley, 1995b). This argument is supported by Wacquant (2004), who has also expressed the need to undertake research not only '*of*' the body (as an object of study) but also '*from'* the body - using the body as a tool of inquiry. It is only via this embodied approach that we can hope to "put minds back in bodies, bodies back in society, and society back into bodies" (Williams & Bendelow, 1998, p. 209).

As a result, a number of authors, in their search for an approach that could be more appreciative of the 'lived-body' have turned their attention to phenomenology, giving rise, amongst other things, to studies about "the body's own experience of its embodiment" (Shilling, 2012, p. 244). Leder's (1990) analysis, for example, (addressed in section 2.6.4), builds theoretically on both phenomenology and deconstructionism to explore the paradoxes of corporeal presence and absence, providing us with an embodied, 'empirical

phenomenological' (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015) approach to studying the body. Other authors have focused on distinctive forms of embodied experience and of phenomenological analysis, for example, Young's (2005) feminist phenomenology, and Ahmed's (2006) queer phenomenology.

Crossley (1995b) offers an extensive account of phenomenology's use within the field of sociology. In calling for an explicit rethinking of the body, Crossley examined the potential of phenomenology for sociology, arguing that drawing on phenomenological insights can give rise to what he terms a 'carnal sociology'. Combining the work of Merleau-Ponty (see section 2.6.2) with that of Mead, Mauss and Bourdieu, Crossley develops an approach that is embodied, yet sensitive to the putative dualisms that are often analysed within sociology, for example agency-structure. Crossley's (1995b) work was timely, emerging at a time when, it could be argued, many social theories of the body illuminated the *Körper* (the structural, objectified aspects of physical being), but were yet to analyse more fully the *Leib* (the living, feeling, sensing, emotional body) (Csordas, 1994; Shilling, 2012; Stoller, 1997). Subsequently, Crossley's 'carnal-sociology' has in contemporary times become much more mainstream, and recent work has progressed the notion of embodiment to include an appreciation of the multisensoriality of embodied action and experiences (for example; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007, 2009; Pink, 2011).

The use of phenomenology within sociology has, however, not been without its critics. Howson and Inglis (2001), argue that this 'phenomenological shift' has consolidated affinities between sociology and other disciplines, but argue that its attempt at generating solutions to mind/body and other forms of *philosophical* dualism has left the core problems for *sociological* analysis of the body relatively untouched. For example, whilst the experience and action side of the action-agency/structure dualism is addressed, it fails to adequately account for social structure. Shilling (2012, p. 245) also expresses concerns with phenomenology's overlooking of structure and adds "that the body can fade away within a phenomenological account…and neglect the importance of physical differences". In response, phenomenologically-inspired sociologists, such as Crossley (2001a, 2001c), have argued that 'sociologised' forms of phenomenology (Allen-Collinson, 2009, 2011b), addressed later in this review, do address the social world and social-structural influences,

and our embodied being is a process involving constant interactions with others. Phenomenology has thus become a resource that has facilitated a sociological turn to lived experience and embodiment (Shilling, 2003, 2012).

The above discussion by no means represents an exhaustive review of the sociology of the body, but instead offers a brief overview of some key developments, to which this study connects. I will return to discuss phenomenology in greater depth later in this review but for now I explore sport's role in the sociology of the body and the body in the sociology of sport and physical cultures.

2.3 Sport's Role in the Sociology of the Body

As Malcolm (2012, p. 88) notes, "sport has played a relatively significant role in the development of the sociology of the body". For Turner, this significance took time to grow, as each edition of his text *The Body and Society* illuminates. In the 1984 first edition, Turner notes how knowledge of gymnastics, among other sports, lies beyond his 'competence'. He thus overlooks sport as an area in which "the question of the human body is especially prominent" (Turner, 1984, p. 6). In the 1996 second edition however, he describes embodiment as "fundamental to much of the sociology of sport", drawing on the work of Loic Wacquant to highlight the body's physical and social malleability via training and exercise (Turner, 1996, pp. 32-33). By the 2008 third edition Turner includes a chapter entitled *Bodies in Motion* that draws insights from his work with Steven Wainwright on ballet, suggesting certain parallels between dancing and the sport of boxing.

Chris Shilling, by contrast, has generally been more empathic in his appreciation of the role of sport in the early developments of the sociology of the body. Shilling's (1993) first edition of *The Body and Social Theory,* cites sports science, 'keep fit', the relationship between exercise and health, and bodybuilding as apposite examples of his core theme of the body as a project. The significance of sport to the sociology of the body continues to be highlighted throughout his subsequent texts. For example, in *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*, Shilling (2005) addresses how sporting bodies have become symbols of nationalism, vehicles for commercial promotions, sites for demonstration of human potential and limitations, as well as becoming important for the generation of

emotional experience, of individual and group identities, and for gender and ethnic inequalities.

Furthermore, Featherstone and Turner's (1995, pp. 2-6) opening editorial in the first edition of the journal *Body & Society,* pays homage to the role of sport, outlining a research programme for the sociology of the body that includes: the symbolic significance of the body; the active role of the body in social life; the body's role in sex and gender relations; the developing relationship between the body and technology; the continued relevance of medical sociology; and the sociology of sport. Subsequent editions of *Body & Society* have included articles from authors both within the sociology of sport and without, focusing on bodies in climbing (Lewis, 2000), martial arts (Spencer, 2009b), running and boxing (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015), mountaineering (Allen-Collinson, Crust, & Swann, 2019), and swimming (Scott, 2010), as well as tackling sport-related issues such as gender (Paradis, 2012), race (St Louis, 2003), and sex testing (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006).

Sociologists of the body have also produced monographs and edited collections focusing on sporting bodies. Three such texts of relevance and importance to this study are: Wacquant's (2004) *Body and Soul* for his portrayal of an evocative 'carnal sociology' of boxing; Spencer's (2012b) *Ultimate Fighting and Embodiment* for its phenomenological perspective; and Throsby's (2016) *Immersion* that provides a detailed ethnographic account of open water marathon swimming. I will draw further examples from these texts, and authors, throughout the remainder of this chapter and thesis, but as a way of introducing the reader to these texts I have included a brief description of each here.

Wacquant's (2004) *Body and Soul* seeks to build an understanding of boxing in an urban, predominantly black ghetto in Chicago, by blending sociology, ethnography and fiction. In doing so, Wacquant illustrates the importance of boxing for developing status, meaning and relationships, and discusses the links between the ring and the street, highlighting how the ghetto is not simply chaotic and unruly as one would perceive, but has structure and order. In doing so Wacquant also highlights how boxers produce and reproduce distinct corporeal cultures through the repetition of obsessive, mundane daily training regimes, which actively mould and create each fighters boxing body. Wacquant's (2004) work is

particularly apposite as, through his own embodied research process, he came to recognise the need to conduct research not only *of* the body, but *from* the body. It is from this position that his study engages with the sociology of the body, providing "an inside-out view" (see Downey, 2005) of training regimes, perceptions, behaviours and their effects. It is this "inside-out view" that the current research aims to utilise, bringing to the fore the embodied multi-sensory experiences of competitive swimmers

Inspired by Wacquant's work, Spencer's (2012b) *Ultimate Fighting and Embodiment*, similarly focuses on the creation of a fighting body, this time in mixed martial arts (MMA). Spencer's phenomenological analysis of being-in-the-world of MMA provides a detailed account of how bodies take on a proliferation of meanings through interacting and intermixing with other bodies. Spencer focuses on the development of body techniques and an MMA habitus, a process he calls "body callusing" to describe the hardening of the body into an MMA body that is able to inflict and receive pain, emphasising the chiasmic relationship between the body and the world (of MMA). Additionally, he sheds light on how injury, or an inability to fight, leads to feelings of a loss of masculinity (in the case of the male boxers studied) and how the emotional rollercoaster of MMA impacts on the various dimensions of the fighters' lives in and out of the ring/cage. In doing so, Spencer highlights how "[t]he body is not merely a surface for discourses to be inscribed upon [but] bodies speak back in significant ways to prescriptions and [thus] the potentialities of bodies cannot be determined *a priori*" (Spencer, 2012b, p. 153, empahsis in original).

Throsby's (2016) *Immersion* provides an extensive (auto)ethnographic account of the marathon swimming lifeworld. Having 'immersed' herself in this lifeworld and completed a number of significant open water long distance swims in a variety of locations around the world, Throsby sets to exploring the embodied and social processes involved in becoming a marathon swimmer. She focuses on how the marathon swimming body is produced through the adoption of a variety of techniques of the body, and its resultant transformations, including the 'shifted sensorium' of marathon swimming. She then proceeds to discuss ideas in relation to 'the good body' including: a critique of charitable swims and 'swimming for…'; an analysis of the gendered swimming body; a description of 'heroic fatness' and how the marathon swimming body goes against the traditional social

understanding of what is a 'good' body; as well as a discussion on pain, injury and the failing body. Overall Throsby (2016) provides an interesting take on an 'aquatic sociology', to which I aim to further contribute.

In closing this section, I emphasize how each of these texts also places the body firmly at the centre of the analyses. In doing so they provide an antidote to the somewhat abstracted and over-generalised character evident in some of the literature relating to the sociology of the body that came before. They each also highlight the prominence of the body within the doing of sport and how the body continues to warrant significant attention in this discipline. The following section therefore sets out the body's role in the sociology of sport.

2.4 Sociology of Sport and Embodiment: The Body in the Sociology of Sport

Although this study is situated within the wider sociological literature outlined thus far, the specific subject matter of embodiment and competitive swimming places it firmly within the sociology of sport and physical culture. In this section, I thus narrow down the focus once again to this particular academic sub-discipline and explore the promise of phenomenology to the study of sporting embodiment.

During the early 1990s Theberge (1991), Loy, Andrews, and Rinehart (1993) and Maguire (1993) each produced reviews arguing that the material body had largely been neglected in the sociology of sport; an omission that also replicated the position vis-a-vis 'mainstream' sociology around that time. Even as late as 2007, Hockey and Allen-Collinson were noting that, despite a corpus of sociological endeavour:

> …it can still be argued that the sociology of sport has to date addressed the body primarily at a certain abstract, theoretical level, with relatively few accounts to be found that are truly grounded in the carnal realities of the lived sporting body (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007, p. 116).

This is particularly curious, for, as Woodward (2009, p. 1) argues, "bodies are pivotal to what constitutes sport, and to how it is understood and experienced". The turn towards the (material) body in mainstream sociology has thus been paralleled with similar developments in the sociology of sport, resulting in a rich corpus of research that examines

the ‘kinds’ of bodies present in different sporting contexts including: the disabled (Smith & Sparkes, 2005), gendered (Grahn, 2016; McMahon & Barker-Ruchti, 2017), injured (Young, 2004) and aged (Wainwright & Turner, 2006) sporting body.

Consequently, most modern sociology of sport textbooks now provide reviews “that reflect the trends within and stimuli to the ‘mainstream’ sociology of the body” (Malcolm, 2012, pp. 91-92). For example, Craig and Jones (2008) discuss how sport is a tool for disciplining, controlling and constraining the body; Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield, and Bradley (2002) discuss the nature-nurture interface of emotions, aspects of the medicalised body, and the relationship between sport as an emotional experience and the establishment of identities; and Jarvie (2006) links the sporting body to the theoretical perspectives of Elias (civilised bodies), Bourdieu (body, class and physical capital) and Foucault (the body, power and knowledge).

Additionally, and again following developments in mainstream sociology of the body, where scholars such as Leder (1990) and Crossley (1995b) examined the value of phenomenology for embodying sociology, writers such as Kerry and Armour (2000) and Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) propose the use of phenomenology in the study of the sporting body. They outline how the use of phenomenology, in particular that of Merleau-Ponty, could help sporting scholars ground their empirical investigations of sporting embodiment in lived-sensory experiences. As Allen-Collinson (2009) noted a decade ago, despite some notable exceptions (for example: Hemphill, 2005; Hughson & Inglis, 2002; Masciotra, Ackermann, & Roth, 2001; McDonald, 2007; Morley, 2001; Wacquant, 2004) at that point “the ‘promise of phenomenology’ (Kerry & Armour, 2000) remains largely under-realised with regard to sporting embodiment”, leaving a paucity of accounts truly grounded in the ‘flesh’ of the lived sporting body (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 279).

The use of phenomenology in the study of sport, as within mainstream sociology, has similarly not been without its critics. As Martínková and Parry (2011, p. 187) note, “not everything that purports to be phenomenology, or employs the term as part of its name, has a good claim to be related to the discipline of phenomenology”. Using Kerry and Armour (2000) and Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) as reference points, Martínková and

Parry illuminate how phenomenology is often misapplied, or used as a synonym for any kind of qualitative research, with little (usually from second hand sources) or no reference to the philosophical basis of the work. More specifically regarding Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007), Martínková and Parry (2011, p. 196) suggest that their "phenomenologically inspired" analysis, lacks the necessary explanation as to how it differs from a phenomenological analysis, nor how it is 'inspired' by phenomenology, thus leaving Hockey and Allen-Collinson's (2007) use of the term 'phenomenological', confusing and misleading. Martínková and Parry (2011) believe that the 'method' Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) outline is, as a result, "just a standard positivistic procedure…[and] the most that such an approach can hope for is merely a taxonomy of reported phenomena. And there is nothing phenomenological about that."

Allen-Collinson (2011a) does however clarify her position, explaining how she situates herself as a "phenomenologically-inspired sociologist". She explains the development of sociological-phenomenology out of philosophical phenomenology and in doing so acknowledges and captures the differences between sociological and philosophical phenomenology. A fuller description of sociological-phenomenology will be provided later in this review (see section 2.6.3), but as Allen-Collinson (2009) notes, the potential for this type of phenomenology to contribute fresh perspectives to the sociological study of embodiment in sport, physical culture, and exercise is considerable.

The current study therefore looks to add to this growing body of research demonstrating how employing a sociologised form of phenomenology can be useful in directing analytical attention to the corporeal, perceptual, social, intersubjective and intercorporeal constituents and dynamics of competitive swimming. On a more general level, this study is also relevant to mainstream sociology, as reflected in the shared concerns about the body and embodiment discussed above. Unfortunately, as Woodward (2009, p. 1) notes it "has not often been sporting bodies that have been cited as the main source of empirical or illustrative material in the development of the theories of the body and embodiment". However, Woodward continues to argue that the study of embodiment in sport is particularly valuable in bringing attention towards the malleability and limitations of the body, highlighting the tensions and interconnections between corporeality and the social

world. These are concerns that are equally relevant to the debates of the body in mainstream sociology, and worthy of scholarly pursuit, opening up a wider sociological imagination to the insights that can be developed from investigations of embodiment, experience, and practice in sport.

As stated earlier, this review is by no means an exhaustive account of the sociology of the (sporting) body and is designed to give the reader a flavour of this developing research area. The focus of this review now shifts to explore some of the research relating to the swimming body as alluded to in Chapter 1, before returning to focus in more depth on some of the philosophical and sociological concepts that provide the theoretical underpinning for this study.

2.5 The Swimming Body in Sociology

As noted in Chapter 1, the majority of sociological research into swimming and the swimming body has tended to focus on critical sociological examinations of gendered relationships or training regimes, often drawing inspiration from the work of Michel Foucault. In this section I provide a selection of this literature outlining how the swimming body in these studies has been treated in much the same way as in wider sociological discussions of the body - as something that can be controlled or managed by various social forces and power relations. For example, McMahon et al. (2012) liken the training practices undertaken by competitive swimmers in the Australian swimming culture, enforced on them by coaches and team managers in the name of performance, to Foucault's notion of 'discipline' leading to the creation of docile bodies. McMahon and Penney (2013a, 2013b) and McMahon and Dinan-Thompson (2011) draw upon Foucault's notions of 'surveillance' and 'the gaze' to highlight how within a sporting context the body can be subjected to visual scrutiny from many eyes, including those of coaches, team-mates, parents and the self. McMahon and Penney (2013a, 2013b) also illuminate how swimmers engage in self-surveillance and 'live by fat numbers', resulting in limiting or purging their food intake in the pursuit of the idealized swimming 'slim-to-win' body. This self-surveillance was further enforced through the fear of deselection from the team or other 'punishments' such as running to burn off 'excess' weight.

Lang (2010) also draws attention to the surveillance and conformity of athletes, highlighting how the pressure of constant surveillance leads to athletes submitting to intensive training protocols and normalised practices. Coaches in swimming, as in other endurance sports like running, often develop these training protocols on the premise that they can be assembled in a coherent, rational manner from highly technical models (e.g. Olbrecht, 2013; Rushall, 2016), utilising the ideas of specificity, overload and taper to produce a desired performance result (Denison, 2010). These 'controlled environments', as Lang argues, result in the creation of a body that is 'machine-like', devoid of thought or feeling; a body that is often incapable of making decisions for itself when it matters most (Denison, Mills, & Konoval, 2017). It should, however, be cautioned that Lang's (2010) analysis focuses on competitive youth swimming whereas the senior swimmers in this study were often given more autonomy and choice within their training programme (see sections 5.3 and 7.5). It is therefore important to consider that Lang's (2010) or McMahon and Penney's (2013a, 2013b) analyses are not indicative of the competitive swimming lifeworld as a whole.

Taking a similar Foucauldian perspective, Jones, Glintmeyer, and McKenzie (2005) use interpretive biography to explore an individual's experiences of a swimming career ended prematurely through disordered eating. Their findings illustrate the significance of the power that coaches have over their athletes, the responsibility that coaches have in establishing and protecting sometimes fragile athlete identities, and the role coach education should play in equipping coaches to deal with complex human problems and issues.

The construction of gendered bodies is the focus of attention for Johnson and Russell (2012), who again utilise a Foucauldian framework and semi-structured interviews with six competitive swimmers based in New South Wales, Australia, to show how embodied traits such as women with broad shoulders are accepted within swimming cultures as the norm, to the point where those immersed in that environment no longer notice them. Yet in social contexts away from the pool, these traits are viewed in a different (often negative) light, creating a complex and contradictory concern about the visibility and invisibility of the swimming body. Similarly, Grahn's (2016) work with Swedish youth swimmers highlights

the tensions between the functional, athletic, swimming body, and the socially accepted aesthetic body.

McMahon and Barker-Ruchti (2017) also focus on the gendered swimming body utilising a Foucauldian framework, extended through Bartky's (1988) analysis of the modernisation of patriarchal power on female bodies, to highlight how the maturing bodies of three female Australian swimmers were increasingly seen as unsuitable for performance. These three female swimmers were thus encouraged, via the practices and enforced punishments of their male coaches, to work towards assimilating a male swimmer's body shape, and behaviours in the pursuit of performance. McMahon and Barker-Ruchti (2017) argue that such practices resulted in these athletes self-regulating their diet, training, and appearance; a process that eventually lead to an unhealthy relationship with their developing bodies. The swimmers also began taking on 'boyish' gestures and actions (e.g. strutting around like male sprinters; cutting hair short) in order to look and act like the boys. The authors highlight the serious implications of gendered practices and power relations at play in this sporting culture for female athletes. A stance that can be extended to include male athletes, as the case of former Australian swimmer Daniel Kowalski highlights (see Byrne, 2005).

It is perhaps unsurprising that these studies have utilised a Foucauldian lens. The competitive swimming environment bears some similarities with the panoptic prison where coaches, team managers, and support staff, acting as the 'guards', expose the swimmers (as 'prisoners') to surveillance via their intensive and invasive 'gaze', and resultant disciplinary practices. It is via these practices that docility and normalisation can occur. Swimming thus provides a sporting context where a knowledge-discourse-power triad (re)constitutes normative constructs through a process of inscription that causes its participants to regulate their selves and their conduct in line with the dominant standards of the triad (Carabine, 2001; McMahon & Barker-Ruchti, 2017). This process ultimately signals one's "conformity to the expectations of the culture" (McMahon & Penney, 2013b, p. 167).

Aside from Foucault, McMahon, McGannon, and Zehntner (2019) employ Goffman's (1963, 1973) work on stigmatisation processes to explore one female swimmer's experiences of 'enacted' stigma, how stigmatisation occurs, and 'felt' or 'self-stigma' in the context of elite and master's swimming in Australia. By studying what they term 'competitive performance stigma' from a first-hand, lived, insider perspective, they highlight how various social situations and agents, including coaches, team managers and other swimmers contribute via acts such as labelling, discrimination, and social isolation to both 'enacted' and 'felt' stigma, and its various consequences, for example, withdrawal from the sport and/or feelings of loss or shame.

Despite proving useful in illuminating some of the complexities of swimming, as noted earlier, these studies often ignore the 'intense embodied experiences' (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015) of competitive swimming. There are however a number of studies that have drawn attention to these experiences within recreational aquatic pursuits which I will refer to later in this review in sections 2.6.1 to 2.6.5. For now, I return to focus on the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

2.6 Phenomenology

Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007) propose that phenomenology, specifically the existential phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, is a valuable resource for the study of embodiment in sport. Although engaging with phenomenology for specific purposes, this thesis does not aim to provide an exhaustive, systematic or critical review of the multiple strands of phenomenology. The following sections do, however, make explicit the phenomenological underpinning of this study. This section therefore charts the historical origins of the philosophy of modern phenomenology through the work of Edmund Husserl, and subsequent developments by Merleau-Ponty, explaining how phenomenology represents a particular way of looking at the world and how the embodied individual is situated within the world.

2.6.1 Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology

Described as arguably the major philosophical movement of the twentieth century, 'modern phenomenology' (Embree & Mohanty, 1997) as a philosophy finds its roots in the

work of Husserl (1859-1938). Husserl's goal was to remedy what he saw as the inadequacies of scientific, 'objective' investigations of human existence, turning instead toward the world as it is experienced in its felt immediacy, in order "to question and unsettle scientific 'habits of thought' that left unquestioned and unproblematised fundamental assumptions regarding phenomenon or phenomena" (Allen-Collinson, 2016, p. 12).

Husserl argued that subjective human experiences cannot be reduced to measurable objects, and that to understand the nature of human knowledge, objective or scientific measurements are not sufficient, as they do not consider the role of perception, context, or the range of social variables that influence a person's cognition (Laverty, 2003). Husserl thus endeavoured to show how subjectivity and objectivity, which positivist science has segregated into polar opposition, are in fact inseparable, each being co-influenced by the other.

In this quest to understand how humans encounter 'things' in their worlds, Husserl (1983) notes how we are always aware of something; that our consciousness is always conscious of something. Husserl (1964) therefore argues that the 'things' we encounter in our lives, are not merely found in the flow of consciousness but are accessible to the conscious mind (Hogeveen, 2012). In other words, the mind does not exist in a vacuum; rather, it is co-related with the world of which it is aware. Such a relationship Husserl termed 'intentionality' (Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, 1991). Humans, as conscious beings, thus experience an intentional relationship with the world, that is, they are not merely affected by 'things' but are mindful of them (Hogeveen, 2012). Husserl (1900/1901; 2001) saw phenomenology as a rigorous human science that aimed to generate not only detailed descriptions of phenomena but also the ways in which human knowledge is developed, and shared understandings generated (Allen-Collinson, 2009, 2016).

As part of his phenomenological thinking, Husserl proposed a number of steps by which the 'essence' of a phenomenon, the very core of the 'thing itself', might be elucidated, and advocated the use of the phenomenological 'epochē' to suspend or 'bracket' all scientific, philosophical, cultural and everyday assumptions enveloped in our 'natural attitude'

(Moran, 2000, p. 11) about a phenomenon. A further step was the 'reduction' whereby researchers aim to arrive at the essential element(s) or 'essences' (Allen-Collinson, 2009, 2011b) of a phenomenon. In Husserl's terms this is to return "to the things themselves" (*zu den Sachen selbst)* (Allen-Collinson, 2009).

Husserl initially sought not only the bracketing of beliefs and assumptions but also believed it possible to bracket oneself from the 'natural attitude' via the transcendental reduction, attaining a pure transcendental consciousness (Allen-Collinson, 2009). It is this idealistic notion of 'transcendental subjectivity', however, that is sometimes perceived to be a weakness of Husserl's early work, particularly within social science. Husserl's early work was perhaps not surprisingly criticised by later phenomenological writers such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Koch, 1995; Moran, 2000), who argue that phenomena are not divisible from the context in which they appear, and cannot be stripped of existing culturally-specific understandings.

Husserl is thought to have recognised and attempted to address this limitation by showing how all subjective consciousness is in fact embedded in an intersubjective community, the *Lebenswelt,* known generally in English as the 'lifeworld' (Allen-Collinson, 2009, 2011a). As Husserl exhorts:

> …let us turn our attention to the fact that in our continuously flowing world-perceiving we are not isolated but rather have, within it, contact with other human beings…In living with one another each one can take part in the life of the others. Thus, in general, the world does not exist for isolated men [sic] but for the community of men; and this is due to the fact that even what is straightforwardly perceptual is communalized (Husserl, 1970, p. 163).

As a concept, the lifeworld thus refers to the world as it is lived by human beings in their immediate, most basic, and fundamental experience (Crossley, 2005a); a world which manifests itself as a structural whole that is both shared and experienced by individuals from their own unique perspective (Finlay, 2011). This world is constituted within our experience by means of the habitual schemas, fore-knowledge and know-how (typifications, in Schützian terms) that we bring to bear upon it. For example, the experiences of a child will result in a much different lifeworld than that of an adult. The lifeworld is thus "a habit-world, a world of experience structured through our habitual ways

of perceiving, understanding and acting in it" (Crossley, 2005a, p. 185). This lifeworld however, is often obscured and not easy to identify and describe (Moran, 2000), due to it being constituted from that which "is usually taken for granted and experienced as common-sense" (Koch, 1995, p. 828); i.e. our 'natural attitude'. To access analytically the lifeworld thus requires the application of the phenomenological method (see section 3.2) to identify and bracket the everyday assumptions surrounding the essences of experiences (Allen-Collinson, 2009). This concept of the lifeworld also generated significant sociological interest and was further developed by Schütz (1967) who synthesised aspects of Husserl's lifeworld to create a phenomenological form of sociology or sociological phenomenology. Sociological phenomenology will be discussed later in this chapter (see section 2.6.3), but for now the focus shifts to discuss the existential phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and its relevance to this study.

2.6.2 Merleau-Ponty's Existential Phenomenology

As noted in the previous section, Husserl's early phenomenological writings have been critiqued by subsequent phenomenologists, including the French philosopher, psychologist, and existential phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961). This section engages with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, introducing some of his key concepts as offering a particular perspective when thinking about the body, and embodied mind, and some of the ways in which his philosophy contributes to conversations about the embodied nature of being.

During the early twentieth century, Merleau-Ponty worked closely with existential writers such as Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre to combine existentialism[1] with elements of Husserl's phenomenological insights (Ehrich, 1999; Hammond et al., 1991). However, in certain respects, Merleau-Ponty disagreed with Sartre, particularly on the central topic of human existence and consciousness. Sartre, according to Langer (1989), adopted a more Cartesian dualist approach, whereas for Merleau-Ponty, some orthodox philosophy, including Cartesianism, was littered with fundamental misconceptions, and only a

[1] Existentialism refers to a philosophical paradigm which seeks to understand the meaning of human existence, and of which Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are early proponents (Moran, 2000).

redefinition of the basic assumptions would be adequate to establish a new ontological understanding (Langer, 1989). Merleau-Ponty, with his interest in biology, psychology and the social sciences, therefore set about challenging the dualisms that had dogged philosophic enquiry, leading him to adopt an embodied view of perception underpinned by the concept of mind-body unity (Crossley, 2001b; Moran, 2000). This embodied perspective, which Merleau-Ponty refers to as that of the 'body-subject' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002), is for some his most significant contribution to philosophical enquiry.

Embodiment is thus a central component of Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology; a perspective that understands the world, the body and human consciousness as fundamentally intertwined, inter-related and mutually influencing (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Merleau-Ponty views the lived-body (*Leib*) not as a "thing" but as a fundamental constituent of an embodied, perceptual capacity; for him, the body is central:

> …we have found underneath the objective and detached knowledge of the body, that other knowledge which we have of it by virtue of its always being with us and of the fact that we are our body (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 239).

From this standpoint, the body is not so much an object or instrument but rather one's own body, *le corps propre* (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007), is the subject of perception; the standpoint from which all things are perceived and experienced (Allen-Collinson, 2009). As Merleau-Ponty notes:

> …we are in the world through our body and insofar as we perceive the world with our body…the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 239).

Merleau-Ponty's investigation of embodiment therefore stresses two key points. First, he seeks to emphasise that our body is our point of perspective on the world, all experience is necessarily perspectival, and our bodies provide us with our perspective. Second, our bodies involve us in the world, and we are always engaged in the world. The body and the world should therefore be seen as elements of a single system. Hence, Merleau-Ponty's concept of the body is deeply holistic and "whether discussing sexuality, perception or motor behaviour, he is always concerned to reveal their interrelatedness within the body-world whole" (Crossley, 2001b, p. 32). To him our bodies are not given to us as objects,

rather “we are our bod[ies]” (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 239) and they are our very way of being-in-the-world (*Dasein* – or, literally, ‘there being’).

This existentialist phenomenological perspective denotes the body as a person’s means of understanding in the world (Meier, 1988), where phenomena are not abstract things, “but are part of our incarnate subjectivity” (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p. 283). Merleau-Ponty (1968) in his later work recasts the notion of *being-in-the-world* with *flesh-of-the-world*, to better convey the centrality of what Allen-Collinson and Owton (2014, p. 549) term our “corpo-reality, our bodily grounded lived reality”, where our mode of being is based on the “union of the psychic and the physiological’’ (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 92) and we are part of the flesh or tissue of the world.

Additionally, Merleau-Ponty utilises the concept of reversibility that purports the human body as being both sentient and sensible; “it sees and can be seen, hears and can be heard, touches and can be touched” (Crossley, 1995b, p. 46). Reversibility is illustrated by Merleau-Ponty via the touching hands example in which the hand that is touching (subject) can become the hand that is touched (object):

> When I press my two hands together, it is not a matter of two sensations felt together as one perceives two objects placed side by side, but of an ambiguous set-up in which both hands can alternate the roles of ‘touching’ and being ‘touched’. What was meant by talking about ‘double sensations’ is that, in passing from one role to the other, I can identify the hand touched as the same one which will in a moment be touching… (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, pp. 106-107).

This reversibility can further be extended to interaction with the physical environment and/or other beings in the world, where one is constituted as a perceiving subject and the other a perceived object. Both are materially situated within the same world, but at least one (or both in the case of human and animal interaction) has the capacity for sentience. Importantly, however, this sentience is possible by virtue of the perceiving subject’s embodied situation in the world. We are therefore inextricably linked to our environment and our experience of embodiment is therefore “always mediated by our continual interactions with other human and non-human bodies” (Weiss, 1999, p. 5) , which Merleau-Ponty refers to as intercorporeality.

Thus, for Merleau-Ponty (2002), in contrast to Descartes' "I think", there is also "I can" – the feel we have of our body and how it connects us to our environment. The original or most fundamental sense of "I" is not therefore the 'cogito', the reflective thinking mind of the Cartesian tradition, but rather our most basic sense of self is a practical sense of the body's active possibilities (Burkitt, 1999, p. 76). One is one's body (Merleau-Ponty, 2002) and, *contra* Descartes, one does not relate to it as to an external object. In the usual everyday flow of life, one generally "knows without knowing" where our various body parts are. As Crossley notes when describing reaching for a book:

> If I wish to move my arm…I do not have first to locate it or think about lifting it. I do not do something in order to move it…Only one thing occurs: my arm moves. The act, we might say is intentional; but it is a single and unified whole: an intentional-action rather than an action added to or caused by an intention. And, as such, the intention need not be formulated either linguistically or reflectively (Crossley, 2001c, p. 121).

This pre-reflective sense of bodily knowing can similarly be extended to an individual's immediate environment, as is evidenced by our ability to move around in and utilise space without having to think about how to do so. Additionally, our engagement with technology such as driving a car or typing on a keyboard can also occur, with some practice and for the most part, without conscious reflection (Crossley, 2001c). These skills become part of our tacit knowledge. This tacit, embodied knowledge, also known as "knowledge-how" or "know-how" (Crossley, 2001c, p. 52) forms part of our corporeal schema (Merleau-Ponty, 2002) - the grasp of the world that we have from the perspective of our body. The corporeal schema can also be modified or expanded through the performance of habitual actions such as learning to swim or play the guitar, which become incorporated into our sense of possibilities for action.

In summary, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology provides a challenge to the Cartesian dualism of positivism. Merleau-Ponty (2002) argues that phenomenology, by seeking to disclose the intentional nature of our acts of consciousness, calls for a dialectical rather than dualist model of experience, in which the self should not be understood in terms of an isolated reflective consciousness, but rather as engaged intentional action or behaviour. Merleau-Ponty (2002) thus rejects the idea of the body as an exterior manipulation of an interior cogito, instead restoring consciousness to its primordial habitation in the flesh. By

situating the body as actively and intentionally engaged with its environment, Merleau-Ponty (2002) enables us to describe our lived experience as beings-in-the-world. In doing so he defies categorising the body as either material object or immaterial subject, offering an alternative foundation for thinking about the body as a reciprocal interaction between self and world (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). His existential phenomenology gives us a philosophical position on embodiment that provides a unique and powerful framework from which to gather data on, and examine human experience (Clegg & Butryn, 2012; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007). This position is apposite to the study of sporting embodiment where the living, situated, and sensing human body is a critical element of participation (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2009).

Despite its strengths, however, using a traditional philosophically-orientated phenomenology as a basis for understandings of the body has been criticised as it can fail to take in to account 'difference', and the power of socio-cultural constraints upon individuals, interactions and relationships (Allen-Collinson, 2009). To address more fully the social-structural framework, insight from other theoretical perspectives is required to 'flesh out' the analysis (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007). This has resulted in the emergence of what have been termed 'empirical' forms of phenomenology (Martínková & Parry, 2011). Of these, sociological-phenomenology, with its ability to "address the structurally, politically and ideologically influenced, historically specific, and socially situated nature of human embodiment and experience" (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2011, p. 332) is of particular interest to this study. It is to this empirical form that I now turn.

2.6.3 Sociological-Phenomenology

Although departing from its 'pure' Husserlian roots, more 'sociologised' versions of phenomenology that incorporate and develop insights from other theoretical frameworks such as feminism, queer studies, and critical sociology (Allen-Collinson, 2009) can provide a useful lens from which to study the multiple effects of culture and social-structural elements upon lived experience (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2014). It should, however, be cautioned that the interrelationship between sociology and philosophical phenomenology is often a difficult one, as both disciplines are distinct with respect to their epistemology, methodology and methods. For example, the various power structures and inequalities of

specific times and cultures are of sociological interest often via empirical research. In contrast, phenomenology as noted earlier in this review is concerned with how reality is constituted on the basis of general structures of experience. Phenomenology therefore investigates how phenomena appear to our subjective consciousness. To do so, the phenomenologist has to go "back to the things themselves" i.e. how things are actually given to our experience, according to Husserl (1999). Therefore, the aim of phenomenological research is to reveal the intentional activities of our subjectivity in order to describe how the world and its objects are constituted (Dreher & Santos, 2017).

Despite the fundamental, disciplinary differences between sociology and phenomenology, they can profit from one another in regard to research. It was Alfred Schütz who first adopted and applied phenomenology within sociology. Schütz's sociological imagination was sparked by Husserl's concepts of the everyday lifeworld and intersubjective communities (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2014; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2016).

This interconnection of phenomenology and sociology is specifically established in Schütz's conceptualisation of the lifeworld where Schütz emphasised the need to address how a social actors' lifeworld is embedded within social structure and cultural milieux (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2016, p. 228). As Schütz explains:

> The world of everyday life is the scene and also the object of our actions and interactions. We have to dominate it and we have to change it in order to realize the purposes which we pursue within it among our fellow-men [sic]. Thus, we operate not only within but upon the world…a pragmatic motive governs our natural attitude toward the world of daily life (Schütz, 1970, pp. 72-73).

For Schütz (1970), the lifeworld is constructed from an individual's stream of consciousness where meaning arises from the 'here-and-now' world of daily experience as it is lived by those engaged in, making sense of, and coming to terms with it. Schütz explains how, this 'here-and-now' everyday reality is the reality that we are most aware of and is of most immediate relevance to us in the general everyday flow of life. It is the daily tasks or natural routines of this practical here-and-now that we are most alert to, yet these daily tasks attract little of our attention due to their familiarity. This ability to negotiate our everyday world depends upon what Schütz (1970) refers to as a 'stock of knowledge at hand', shaped

by the social context in which we reside. Our interpretation of everyday reality is thus based:

> …upon a stock of previous experiences of it, our own experiences and those handed down to us by our parents and teachers, which in the form of 'knowledge at hand' function as a scheme of reference (Schütz, 1970, p. 72).

Schütz (1970, p. 163) thus posits that each individual inhabits their own unique "biographically determined situation" in which each person's consciousness of, attentiveness to, and feelings about their particular, subjective here-and-now reality will vary (Schütz, 1970, p. 165).

Despite this uniqueness of individual subjective experience, this does not mean that the individual is somehow treated as isolated or separate from society. As Schütz notes, it is the very intersubjectivity of human life that is of importance, and that influences human consciousness and society:

> …the world of my daily life is by no means my private world but is from the outset an intersubjective one, shared with...experienced and interpreted by others…The unique biographical situation in which I find myself within the world at any moment of my existence is only a very small extent of my own making. I find myself always within a historically given world which, as a world of nature as well as a sociocultural world, had existed before my birth and which will continue to exist after my death. This means that the world is not only mine but also my fellow men's [sic] environment; moreover, these fellow men [sic] are elements of my own situation, as I am of theirs (Schütz, 1970, pp. 163-164).

Thus, the social world is always shared with others, where each individual's subjective reality is inevitably linked to, and dependent upon the intersubjective shared reality that is society. In order to negotiate our way around this reality we each bring our own stock of knowledge and recipes (procedures) derived from those around us. It is the mutuality of this knowledge that allows us to interact with others, for example, via shared language. Language to Schütz is one way that we "typify" the various elements of our environment. It is via these typifications – the typical ways we expect individuals of varying statuses and roles in society to act – that we construct a shared world on a face-to-face basis (Schütz, 1970). Researchers can thus study the stock of knowledge and typifications that actors hold and draw upon in their ordinary, everyday lives.

Schütz's work was subsequently built upon by Berger and Luckmann (1966) who, drawing upon some principles of phenomenological thought, sought to investigate the social construction of reality, and the ways in which social actors mutually construct and sustain reality via social interaction and intersubjectivity (Allen-Collinson, 2011a; Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2014). Berger and Luckmann examined how such 'reality' can become embedded within society and transmitted from generation to generation, including via a stock of taken-for-granted 'common sense' knowledge (Allen-Collinson, 2011a).

Despite the insightfulness of Schütz's form of social phenomenology it has been given only minimal attention in contemporary sociology, as Kim and Beard (2009) argue, whereas the European phenomenological traditions have been afforded greater attention. Kim and Beard (2009) thus put forward Schütz's work as a clear remedy to what they see as the arid, over analysed and theorised traditional sociological perspectives, allowing researchers the opportunity to elucidate the structures underpinning the knowledge that forms the basis of everyday social life and thus sociological enquiry. This point is echoed by Dreher (2012) and Dreher and Santos (2017), who highlight how an 'applied phenomenology' such as Schütz's could 'bridge' sociology and phenomenology to allow not only the sociological investigation of the social construction of social phenomena such as love, power, humour and more, but also the phenomenological descriptions of the consciousness activities and preconditions involved in such phenomena (Dreher & Santos, 2017).

Despite its analytic strengths, Schütz's work has not been without criticism on a number of grounds, for example, its lack of empirical application (see Kim & Beard, 2009), its over-reliance on geographical proximity, and, an ensuing inability to account for the 'big worlds' of global communication (Crossley, 1996). A further perceived shortcoming of Schütz's writings relates to the body. Although his work can certainly be read as embodied, Schütz does not accord particularly detailed attention to the material, moving, sensing body. Merleau-Ponty, however, does attend directly to the embodied nature of existence. Therefore, in drawing inspiration from both Schütz and Merleau-Ponty, along with other sociological and phenomenologically inspired analyses such as Drew Leder's (1990) *The Absent Body*, it is possible to bring to life and "challenge the taken-for granted assumptions and presuppositions of everyday life that often go un/under-analysed" (Hockey & Allen-

Collinson, 2016, p. 228). It is this sometimes uneasy combination of phenomenology and sociology that provides a powerful if very challenging way of addressing sporting embodiment. Before moving on to look at how this combination of phenomenology and sociology has been used in the study of sporting embodiment specifically, I want to consider three other phenomenologically inspired and interrelated concepts; Leder's (1990) Dis- and Dys-appearing body, Zieler's (2010) EU-appearance, and what Allen-Collinson and Owton (2015) refer to as experiences of 'intense embodiment'.

2.6.4 Phenomenological Inspired Analyses: The Absent Body, Eu-appearance and Intense Embodiment

Drew Leder's (1990) text, *The Absent Body,* provides an embodied phenomenologically-inspired approach to studying the body, which is a particularly useful guiding phenomenological perspective for this study. In his text, Leder (1990) described two different modes of bodily being-in-the-world; the dis and dys-appearing body, both of which are highly relevant phenomenologically-inspired concepts when studying the experiences of sporting embodiment given the physical, kinaesthetic and sensuous nature of such experiences.

In what Leder (1990) terms the 'disappearing' mode of being-in-the-world, one's focus is drawn away from one's own body to the person or object with whom, or which, we are engaged. As a result, when involved in everyday activities, awareness of the body often remains on the periphery of our perception, thus evading explicit exploration. As such the body often remains only indirectly available to experience, fading into the background, in a mode that Leder (1990) calls bodily 'dis-appearance[2]'. Such corporeal 'absence' usually takes place while we are engaged in some purposeful action; for example, during walking my legs do not in general demand my explicit attention and as such fade into the background of consciousness. In this state, individuals do not have to think about how to move, i.e. about locomotion, but instead are focused on the accomplishment of the task, as often occurs during recovery sessions in swimming when swimmers are not necessarily

[2] Dis-appearance refers to 'dis-' in the context of 'not-appearing' as opposed to the vanishing of something that was present to the gaze.

paying attention to technique or skill. In the disappearing mode of being, the object of our focus is therefore outside of the body, resulting in a relationship between embodied self and world that is characterised by what Leder (1990) calls a 'from-to' structure: 'from' the body we are directed 'to' the objects of our experience. In other words, the body is that *from* which the subject attends *to* the world.

The underlying from-to structure of engaging in the world necessarily entails a reciprocal exchange where one's lived body is altered by the demands of the world and the world itself is altered by one's interaction with it. Dis-appearance is therefore possible when the mind and body act harmoniously with the environment or situation, allowing the subject to move and engage in a wide variety of activities without conscious thought, using skills that they have learnt. To use Merleau-Ponty's term, subjects have 'incorporated' these skills into their bodily schemas i.e. into their systems of sensory-motor abilities, becoming part of the body's pre-reflective know how. In other words, familiar items such as clothing and furniture, and even spaces such as rooms in a home, and one's own neighbourhood become extensions of our corporeality in a sense, as they no longer capture our focal attention and thus recede from our explicit awareness as we engage in our daily activities and projects. Thus, the disappearance characteristic of the body is said to expand to those areas of the world with which we are in intimate, continual contact (Leder, 1990, p. 35).

In contrast, the 'dys-appearing' body is characterised by the body shifting from its position in the 'background', to becoming very much the 'foreground' of our attention (Leder, 1990). At moments of corporeal dysfunction, such as stubbing a toe, pulling a muscle or biting the tongue, the absent body emerges to our explicit awareness, reappearing with a vengeance, as an 'Other' juxtaposed to our concept of self (Leder, 1990, p. 70). Leder (1990, p. 84) employs the term 'dys-appearance' to describe this reappearance as a thematic and sensory focus of our experience in a biologically pathological (pain, fear) or socially (self-consciousness, embarrassment) deviant form. Previously 'silent' areas of the body now exhibit disruptive symptoms, seizing one's attentions and demanding a re-orientation of one's intentionality (Leder, 1990, p. 71) from "outward toward the world" (Leder, 1990, p. 74), to interoceptively towards the site of pain or discomfort as an explicit object of attention. As Leder (1990, p. 73) asserts, "pain is the very concretisation of the unpleasant,

the aversive. It places upon the sufferer what I will term an affective call". Pain, to Leder, therefore disrupts the individual's mind-body-world relation in a negative way. The normal from-to structure is subsequently challenged as pain disrupts one's experience of space and time as well as the subject's relations to both themselves and others. The body, which has been that from which one directs attention to others and the world, now becomes that to which one attends. We no longer experience that we are our body, but rather that we have a body. The body, thus becomes thematised as 'Other' in and of itself: in other words, it comes to occupy the 'to' position of the from-to structure, where the body or the specific body part in question often becomes 'alien' or seen as a hindrance to one's projects.

In contrast to Leder's notion of 'dys-appearance', that is argued to occur when the body appears in consciousness as feeling 'ill' or 'bad', Zeiler (2010) argues that experiences of bodily pleasure are typically not alienating experiences, even though the body as a thematic object of experience involves a similar mode of attention as described above. As Zeiler (2010, p. 334) notes "the subject can attend to her or his body as something positive and that this attention need not result in discomfort or alienation". The body, Zeiler (2010) argues, therefore presents itself as a site of 'eu-appearance[3]' where it stands forth as something positive, good or easy, without becoming a hindrance. An individual's intentionality can subsequently remain undisrupted, resulting in 'comfort and harmony'. Zeiler (2010) gives the following example from physical exercise to illustrate her point:

> Imagine a hot summer's day. A woman plunges into the sea. She feels the warmth of the water against her body and starts to crawl along the sea-shore; she enjoys the strength of her arms when swimming. In such a case, she is aware of her body as well, easy or good (Zeiler, 2010, p. 338).

Although distinctly aware of her body, in this state the swimmer's mind-body-world unity remains in harmony, without threatening or disrupting her intentionality, nor experiencing discomfort or alienation. Indeed, her bodily awareness implies the opposite: comfort and harmony (Zeiler, 2010). Zeiler does, however, make the point that should the swimmer do this each day, so that the feelings become mundane and taken-for-granted, her body may

[3] Eu-appearance – Just as the Greek *dys* is used to highlight the experience of the body as bad or ill in dys-appearance, Zeiler (2010) uses the Greek prefix *eu* to highlight the experience of the body as well, easy or good.

shift from a state ‘eu-appearance’ to ‘dis-appearance’ as these sensations become ‘incorporated’ into her body schema.

Additionally, and to finish this section, Allen-Collinson and Owton (2015, p. 247) and Allen-Collinson, Vaittinen, Jennings, and Owton (2018c) utilise the term ‘intense embodiment’ to describe periods of heightened sensory awareness and corporeal existence. Under this ‘intense embodiment’ banner they include both Leder’s (1990) concept of the dys-appearing body, as well as Zeiler’s (2010) eu-appearing one, due to the heightened awareness that both discomfort and pleasure can bring. Alongside their own data, Allen-Collinson and Owton (2015) utilise the example of Shilling and Bunsell’s (2009) work with female bodybuilders to illustrate their point, where for these bodybuilders the boundaries between pleasure and pain often become blurred as their muscles work “to the max”. Thus, intense embodiment connotes a heightened sense of corporeal ‘aliveness’ often with the senses working at intense levels (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015), be that in pleasure or pain.

Having outlined the theoretical position and key concepts that underpin this study, the next section will consider how phenomenology has been utilised in the existing research literature on sport and physical cultures.

2.7 Phenomenology in Sport and Physical Culture

Kerry and Armour (2000) were among early advocates of phenomenology’s relevance to research in the sports studies’ spectrum. Quoting Whitson (1976, p. 62) they note how key sporting experiences such as female participation, dropout, the coach-athlete relationship, and peak performance, “might be usefully illuminated” by employing a phenomenological approach (Kerry & Armour, 2000). To illustrate this point, an exemplar drawn from Kerry and Armour (2000, pp. 3-4) is useful. Employing the example of ‘hitting the wall’ in distance running, Kerry and Armour (2000) contrast a physiological and phenomenological approach to understanding this phenomenon. The physiologist, we may assume, would conduct a formal testing procedure holding several variables constant, while manipulating others to ascertain whether some distinctive, ‘objective’ bodily process, for example, glycogen depletion, is responsible for the ‘hitting the wall’ phenomenon. The phenomenologist,

however, would endeavour to capture the lived experience of hitting the wall; what it is actually like for a human being to experience hitting the wall in her or his consciousness, irrespective of whether 'the wall' exists in any 'objective' physiological sense (Allen-Collinson, 2011a; Kerry & Armour, 2000). Kerry and Armour (2000) also champion phenomenology as being specifically useful to the sociology of sport, due to its ability to provide in-depth analysis of meaning. However, Kerry and Armour (2000) noted how underused phenomenology is as a research approach within sports studies, finding only six articles published in the sociology of sport spectrum at that time: Pronger's (1990) phenomenology of gay men in athletics, Rail's (1990, 1992) phenomenological examination of experiences of contact in women's basketball, Wood's (1992) phenomenological descriptions of the experiences of lesbian physical education teachers, Smith's (1992) study of the lifeworld of physical education, and Wessinger's (1994) study of the lived meaning of scoring in physical education games.

Nearly a decade after the article by Kerry and Armour (2000), Allen-Collinson (2009) revisited phenomenology's relevance to sports studies, reminding us that the underlying premise of phenomenology according to Kim (2001, p. 69) "is not to denude human beings, but to reawaken ourselves to the idea that we are beings who live with and through bodies". Allen-Collinson (2009) also noted at that time that despite the continued promise of phenomenology, there still remained a relative dearth of studies that fully engaged with its potential. Since then a growing body of sport, exercise, and physical activity literature employing phenomenology has begun to emerge. A selection of this work, alongside other sources relevant to this study, will now be considered to give a flavour of this emerging body of research, rather than comprehensive coverage of this literature. In making these selections, I am intensely aware that some excellent work may have been omitted but in keeping with the underlying perspectives of this thesis I have drawn from works that focus on individual and/or endurance sports, and engage with ideas pertaining to becoming and doing, the senses, pain and enduring, and intersubjectivity and intercorporeality.

2.7.1 Becoming and Doing

To become corporeally proficient as a fighter, a skate-boarder, a circuit class exerciser, or a swimmer requires the acquisition of a variety of 'techniques of the body' (Mauss, 1979)

that contribute to the production of a specific athletic habitus. Mauss (1979) deploys the terms 'techniques of the body' or body techniques to evaluate the bodily dispositions of different social groups within different societies. Drawing on his observations of contrasting types of bodies, such as soldiers on the battlefront, or nurses on hospital wards, Mauss (1979) suggests that different social groups learn how to use their bodies in different ways, for example, in many cultures and societies, there is a gender differentiation in that women learn to walk differently from men; French troops march and dig differently to British troops. Building on these observations Mauss (1979, p. 97) defined body techniques as "ways in which from society to society men [sic] know how to use their bodies". In doing so Mauss (1979) pulls together not only the physical and mental aspects of human being, but also the social, into an irreducible whole and uses the concept of 'habitus' to conceptualise the collective knowledge involved in body techniques (Crossley, 2007). The notion of 'habitus', as Mauss (1979) explains, originates from the Latin translation of the Greek 'hexis' or 'exis' (or relatively stable disposition in English), a concept used by Aristotle to capture the practical wisdom and reason of everyday life. Body techniques, as habitus, are thus forms of practical reason or wisdom that in Mauss' (1979, p. 101) words "do not vary just with individuals and their imitations; they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, prestiges". Mauss (1979) utilises observations of techniques of movement such as running, jumping, climbing and swimming to illustrate his point.

The main strength of Mauss's work, Crossley (2007) argues, is in highlighting how body techniques provide a platform from which the concept of 'embodiment' can become a researchable object. By focusing on body techniques as forms of understanding and knowledge it becomes possible to explore the embodiment of the doing of a range of practices and processes (Crossley, 2007); a position pertinent to this study. While Mauss's work provides a sound platform to explore embodiment, his notion of the habitus can be further developed through the work of other writers including Bourdieu and phenomenologists such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Schütz. By engaging with the work of Bourdieu the notion of habitus is developed from the premise that it acts upon the various agents engaged within it, shaping them through their acquisition of certain body techniques, to also include the notion that agents can work back upon the habitus. As such,

Bourdieu develops the notion of habitus to be more like a structured, structuring structure, that both shapes and is shaped by those involved (Crossley, 2004a).

Although recognising the relative stability and durability of certain dispositions within a habitus, the phenomenological concept of the habitus is generally considered more dynamic and fluid, seen as a "lived-through structure-in-process, constantly evolving as an effect of the interactions of the agent or group with both others and their physical environment" (Crossley, 2004a, p. 39). This interactive process largely involves the development and refinement of habituated bodily actions that become part of the individual's corporeal schema. As Crossley (2001c, p. 123) succinctly describes "the corporeal schema is an incorporated bodily know-how and practical sense; a perspectival grasp upon the world from the 'point of view' of the body", developed via habit. Habit to Merleau-Ponty, is not the mere mechanical repetition of action, but the ability to grasp and incorporate, within one's body schema, a tacit and practical 'principle' of action that permits new ways of acting in and understanding the social world, creating the habit-body (Crossley, 2001c, p. 127), much like Mauss's body techniques. Consequently, sports participants develop an understanding of how to do their sport not only cognitively, but also corporeally. Their prolonged immersion in the daily habitual training practices of their chosen sport embeds within them a 'fleshy' knowledge and memory that is sedimented and refined over time (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007). For example, Hogeveen (2013) utilises the concept of habit and the corporeal schema to investigate the acquisition of the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) grappler's body. Hogeveen (2013) highlights how BBJ athletes, including himself, spend hours on the mats sparring with partners and engaging with technique, allowing novice bodies to acquire and reinforce the techniques of BJJ. This constant repetition of movements and drilling of positions with various training partners produces a body that is capable of efficient, and often pre-reflective action; a body that can seize hold of the significances from its environment and act accordingly. As Hogeveen notes:

> While sparring my body is in constant motion. I am grabbing, twisting, shifting my centre of gravity, defending, reaching and sweeping. Despite this motility, which to the outside observer might appear frenetic, I have intimate knowledge of where my hands are located without calling them to mind (Hogeveen, 2013, p. 86).

This is not merely a reflex or automatic form of response, however, as the body is able to understand familiar stimulus and thus bring about the necessary embodied 'habits' (Hogeveen, 2013). Through this process of diligent practice, the novice body thus becomes a skilled BJJ grappling body.

Downey's (2005) phenomenological ethnography *Learning Capoeira* also focuses on the learning of new bodily disciplines and practices in becoming a 'capoeirista'. Downey (2005, p. 30) illuminates how the *roda* – capoeira ring – is a site for acquiring skills and bodily comportments linked to specific attitudes, which "bleed over into everyday life". Skills and movements are learnt not through rules, imitation or mimicry, but rather by learning to move and improvise, "creating experiences and shaping perceptions that guide a student's own discovery of a skill" (Downey, 2005, p. 45). Through this movement and training, students' bodies, as well as their characters, are transformed, developing a bodily flexibility, deceptiveness, and cunning that allows them to anticipate the moves of their opponents. This ability Downey refers to as a 'Rogue Swagger'.

Crossley (2004a, 2004b, 2005b) offers a developed notion of the concept of body techniques in proposing "reflexive body techniques" (RBTs), as "those body techniques whose primary purpose is to work back upon the body, so as to modify, maintain or thematise it in some way"(Crossley, 2005b). RBTs are thus both techniques of the body and for the body, reproduced via interactions with other embodied agents. In the former, RBTs refer to those techniques performed by the body that involve a type of embodied knowledge and comprehension, beyond the level of language and consciousness. In the latter sense, RBTs are techniques that modify or transform the body in specific ways, for specific purposes (Crossley, 2004a, 2004b, 2005b). RBTs are thus collections of body techniques, practised together to serve a common purpose or goal.

Crossley (2004a) illustrates this conceptualisation, describing how taking part in circuit training classes involves participants mastering not only a variety of body techniques but how participants must also become effective and fluent in the language game of the class. Crossley (2004a) uses the example of the instructor calling out various body techniques, for example 'grapevine', and how for this command to achieve its desired result each

participant must know "*how to do"* the steps involved and have a sense of "*the timing"* to shift into this move (Crossley, 2004a, p. 45). As such, the singular word 'grapevine' takes on a more explicit translation as "the next move I want you to perform, when we have finished this sequence, is the sequence we call the grapevine" (Crossley, 2004a, p. 45). Participants must, therefore, have a practical grasp of when the current sequence is to end, when the next is due to begin, and an understanding of how the two moves connect so that they can finish one body technique in a position that allows seamless transition to the next body technique in order to remain in time. This skill requires a considerable degree of acquired embodied know-how and 'tuning in' to the class (Crossley, 2004a).

Spencer (2009a, 2012b) too utilises a phenomenological conceptualisation of habitus, and RBTs in the construction of the mixed martial art (MMA) body. He refers to this as *Body Callusing,* in which fighters toughen their bodies to be able to give and receive pain and become capable of withstanding the rigorous demands that the sport places on the body. Fighters take their bodies as a site of action and aggressively seek, through the incorporation of body techniques and the utilisation of a complex assemblage of RBTs, to harden the body and turn it into a weapon (Spencer, 2009a).

Graham (2013) also explores how habitus and RBTs are used in another combat sport, Tae Kwon Do (TKD). Graham illustrates that to achieve a TKD technician habitus, a fighter must reach an embodied understanding of the mantra of "there is no *try* in tae kwon do"; a concept that encourages "doing over thinking". *Try* denotes conscious thought preceding movement, whereas skilled practitioners understand that the physical and mental demands of the art are interdependent. Such a position is achieved through a repeated training regimen and the successful acquisition of RBTs (flexibility, grace, balance, co-ordination) that act back upon the agent, eventually allowing him or her to move from the slow, awkward movements of a beginner to the fast, smooth, rhythmical, 'doing without thinking' movements of a *technician.* In doing so, the practitioner develops a "practical bodily know-how" (Crossley, 2004a, p. 45) of TKD.

Moving to the aquatic world and of direct relevance to the current study, Throsby (2016) refers to the wealth of body techniques that prospective swimmers have to incorporate

and embody reflexively in order to swim long distances and belong to the wider community of marathon swimming. Throsby (2016) groups these techniques into two interconnecting domains. Firstly, there are the techniques of swimming and their associated environment-specific techniques; for example, keeping one's mouth closed in the sea as opposed to open like most pool swimmers. Secondly, there is a wide range of pre-, during and post-swim activities utilised to reduce risk of harm and facilitate endurance, as well as signalling social belonging. For example, there are processes of greasing up, feeding during swims and the peril of novice swimmers arriving with inappropriate swimwear and the deleterious social consequences of this.

Looking beyond the body techniques that constitute the athletic habitus, the next section explores another intimately interrelated aspect of becoming: the sensory transformations that both facilitate technique acquisition and arise from it. Before looking at some of this work in greater detail, I first set the scene for sensory research in sociology and the sociology of sport more generally.

2.7.2 The Sociology of the Senses

In recent years, a substantial and coherent body of social science literature has begun to develop in the sociology of the senses, creating something of a "sensorial revolution" (Howes, 2005). Sensory studies are now not only being undertaken by biologists, psychologists and physiologists, but by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers and literary scholars (Howes, 2006), who argue for the senses to be seen as 'social', revealing significant knowledge about "selfhood, culture and social relations" (Low, 2012, p. 271). These writers argue for the crucial role that the senses play in society, highlighting how the senses have the ability to mediate between meaning and materiality (Hsu, 2008), negotiating the relationship "between self and society, mind and body, idea and object. The senses are everywhere" (Bull, Gilroy, Howes, & Kahn, 2006, p. 5). As Vannini, Waskul, and Gotschalk (2012a, p. 15) state "humans sense as well as make sense" and it is this process that underlines how the senses are inextricably linked to the shaping of people's knowledge of themselves, others, and their life worlds (Sparkes, 2009a). The senses are thus both shapers and bearers of (sub)culture, and as Pink (2009a) and Hsu

(2008) have argued, the sensuous and sensing body is the most fundamental domain of cultural expression, deserving serious attention in the analysis of the body and of societies.

Addressing the sensorium then has been timely, but as sociologists, human geographers, and anthropologists (e.g. Potter, 2008) signal, research should not be constrained by considering only the traditional five-sense Western sensorium. This position is supported by Vannini et al. (2012a), who refer to this latter sensorium as 'arbitrary', as it does not include the more visceral senses of pain, proprioception or temperature, all of which are pertinent to the sociology of sporting embodiment (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2011) and to this study. Accordingly, Vannini et al. (2012a, p. 7) argue that ignoring these interoceptive senses, is to "grossly oversimplify human sensual experience, both within and across cultures", especially when other cultures do not abide by the same sensorium as Western societies (Low, 2012). For example, the Anlo-Ewe of south-eastern Ghana regard balance as an important sense representing a person's character and moral uprightness (Geurts, 2002).

Studying the sensorium has also raised questions *vis-à-vis* the unequal care and attention afforded the various senses (Sparkes, 2016). Within Western societies, sight is often held as the pre-eminent sense (Vannini et al., 2012a); a stance that is reflected by the visual bias in much of the associated academic literature (Sparkes, 2009a). Bull and Black (2003, p. 1) note how "scopic metaphors are routinely invoked when thinking about how and what we know", emphasising how vision has been the dominant force in understanding society (Sparkes, 2009a). In doing so, hearing, smell, touch and taste were often relegated to secondary senses (Classen, 1998; Sparkes, 2009a), but as Sparkes (2016, p. 344) notes "such relegation ignores the complexities of our carnal and thoroughly embodied ways of knowing as we both sense and make sense of the world around us". As a result, every domain of sensory experience is a field of cultural elaboration and every domain of sensory experience "is also an arena for structuring social roles and interactions. We learn social divisions, distinctions of gender, class and race, through our senses.…sensual relations are [thus] social relations" (Howes, 2003, p. xi). To ignore the senses therefore means ignoring a whole raft of negotiated and shared social and cultural norms.

Sensory and phenomenological scholarship has also challenged the assumptions that our sensory modalities are perceptual systems isolated from one another. As Merleau-Ponty (2002, p. 257) notes "We say *a priori* that no sensation is atomic, all sensory experience presupposes a certain field, hence co-existences". Sensing therefore is a 'multisensory' or 'intersensory' process, a 'synaesthesia[4]' (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2017), where a combination of some, if not all the senses are used to help us negotiate the environments we inhabit (Calvert, Spence, & Stein, 2004; Hammer, 2015). The sensing body is therefore part of a total environment providing not only "embodied knowing and skills that we use to act on or in that environment, but…the body itself is simultaneously physically transformed as part of this process" (Pink, 2011, p. 347). Throsby (2013, p. 12) likens this to "feeling at home" in an environment, not because of the outcome of intellectualised technical mastery or overcoming of challenges (fear, sickness, finishing in the case of marathon swimming), but as an example of what Lewis (2000, p. 71) terms cultivated "corporeal knowing". Therefore, in order for a body to become an embodied swimming, running, bullfighting or any other body, it must be transformed physiologically, functionally and sensorially, not only through a mind-body integration, but also in an emplaced way, involving "the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment" (Howes, 2005, p. 7).

Given this 'intersensorality' (and intercorporeality), researchers are often concerned with the connections and interactions between sensory modalities in terms of how they generate cross-modal experiences that shape how we come to understand, and perform our embodied selves in relation to others as sentient, fleshy, emplaced, permeable beings in various social situations (Sparkes, 2016), that is, intercorporeally. In "recognition of the primacy of all the senses in our day-to-day lives" (Spencer, 2014, p. 234), a small but significant group of sociological researchers working from a diverse range of traditions and employing a variety of methods now analytically embrace the sensory dimension. Phenomenologically-sensitive approaches are well-placed to produce accounts of sporting embodiment truly grounded in the corporeality of the lived sporting body and its sensory activities including, movement, the aural, the visual, the olfactory and the haptic (Hockey

[4] As Allen-Collinson and Hockey (2015) note the term 'synaesthesia' is more commonly used to indicate a 'confusion' of the senses, where someone experiences one sensory modality (e.g. the auditory) via another modality (e.g. the visual). For example, when someone listening to music experiences colours.

& Allen-Collinson, 2007), and other senses such as those of heat (e.g. Allen-Collinson et al., 2018c). The following section provides a flavour of this work.

The visual is the focus for Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2006) in their collaborative autoethnographic account of distance running. They explore how participants develop particular ways of seeing and experiencing their training routes by drawing on specific sub-cultural stocks of knowledge. Allen-Collinson and Hockey (2015) use the same methodology to further investigate how distance runners visualise their training routes in respect to hazardous places, performance places, and the time-place-space nexus. Alongside this, Hockey (2006) illuminates how, in addition to using vision, distance runners also utilise their auditory, olfactory, and haptic senses to negotiate their routes. Regarding the olfactory in particular, he notes how as runners train, they produce and engage with 'smellscapes' particular to them and their routes. These smellscapes consist of a mix of odours and/or aromas that change according to activity, space, seasonal and temporal conditions, helping individuals to validate their athletic identity in an embodied, biographical and/or space-time sense.

Evans and Sleap (2015) also draw attention to the role of the olfactory in relation to the often-overwhelming smell of chlorine usually associated with pool based aquatic activities. Aligned to this was the associated negative experience of chlorinated water 'stinging' participants eyes. For many of the participants in Evans and Sleap's (2015) study these negative embodied experiences, many of which occurred several years before, greatly influenced their current non-participation in swimming as a leisure activity, as they still bore the emotive scars of these earlier negative experiences.

Combining interview data from an experienced diver with their own collaborative autoethnographic running data, Allen-Collinson and Hockey (2011) investigate the haptic dimensions of temperature and pressure in distance running and scuba-diving. They reveal how the texture, movement and temperature of the elements through which they move are fundamental to the embodied experiences of runners and divers. The haptic is further explored by Allen-Collinson and Owton (2015) in relation to thermoception and thermoregulation, where the 'touch' of heat, particularly in warming up and

thermoregulation, is a key structure to the experience of running and boxing. They note how an effective corporeal 'warming up' is crucial to preparing body and mind for physical exertion (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015). This physiological and psychological warming up, is reflective of the phenomenological focus on the mind-body nexus; a process that, as Potter (2008) notes, can produce a sense of internally felt energy and bodily readiness, leaving the body-mind ready to engage in the hard work of training; which itself brings an additional corporeal challenge: thermoregulation (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015).

The process of maintaining a core body temperature of around 37°C, involves both keeping warm and remedial measures to induce cooling. With regards to keeping warm, Allen-Collinson and Owton (2015) describe how both runners and boxers are subjected to cold air on the skin or in the lungs. Both experiences are commensurate with Merleau-Ponty's (2002) portrayal of the intertwining of body-world, where the body is literally touched by the elements, often bringing about bodily 'dys-appearance' (Leder, 1990). Additionally, in terms of thermoregulation and keeping cool, Allen-Collinson and Owton (2015) note how the uncomfortable, highly unpleasant accumulation of heat without sufficient release (including via sweating) can also initiate a bodily 'dys-appearance' (Leder, 1990).

In regard to aquatic activities, Evans et al. (2017) note how mothers would be keenly aware of their children's 'goose pimples' as a reaction to the temperature of the water. Understanding experientially that 'goose pimples' often signalled a state of 'being cold', their appearance often resulted in the cessation of aquatic activity and retreat towards warmer areas. Evans et al. (2017) also note the relative coldness of the changing environment as posing a particular embodied concern and discomfort especially for those with young children to dry and get warm. Throsby (2013) too notes how the touch of temperature is also central to marathon swimming, describing how on her first lake swim of 2009, she experienced a:

> …powerful drive to hyperventilate, and a fierce 'ice cream' headache; [her] back and thighs felt 'on fire'…[her] hands had lost all dexterity and fingers felt sausage like; [she] couldn't feel her lips, hands or feet, and goose bumps rose high on [her] skin (Throsby, 2013, p. 13).

Throsby (2013) adds how, over time, specialised training brings about changes not only in

the body's thermoregulatory systems (Makinen, 2010) making it possible to stay safely in the cold water for longer periods, but also thermoceptive changes that alter how these experiences feel. This is highlighted through more experienced marathon swimmers being able to assess, via their accumulated stock of knowledge, the tangible differences in water temperature, and what type of swimming is possible, something that would be unintelligible to novices (see Chapter 6 for further discussion).

Touch is therefore a very direct way of feeling, experiencing, and understanding the world. For sportspeople, touch is often an active, deliberate, highly specific, and much practised experience combining information about the sporting body, terrain, and equipment with a kinaesthetic awareness of the body as it moves (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2011; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007). As sportspeople 'tune into' (Ingold, 2004, p. 332) and negotiate their various sporting environments, they often develop a haptic relationship with said environment through the interactions of their sporting body with that of others and various objects (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007). Dant and Wheaton emphasise the significance of this haptic knowledge in understanding windsurfing, emphasising the board and rig as an extension of the body:

> …[windsurfing] requires a fine interaction between the sailor's [windsurfer] body and the kit: there is a complex "material interaction" between the material capital that is in the objects of the kit and the embodied capital that is in the body of the sailor…The two hands, the two feet, and the hips or torso all need to make fine adjustments that alter the relationship between the rig and the board (Dant & Wheaton, 2007, p. 10)

Focusing on the aural dimension, Allen-Collinson and Owton (2014) combine an interview-based study conducted by Owton with non-elite athletes diagnosed as asthmatic, with Allen-Collinson's autophenomenographic experiences as a runner who suffers with mild exercise induced asthma. Their findings illuminate how athletes with asthma undertake a very specific from of auditory work, by paying specific attention to their environment, the sounds generated by their asthma, and other proprioceptive indicators. Such refined auditory attunement enables these athletes to identify tiny nuanced changes in their body, and their body-world relationship, allowing them to make any necessary adjustments.

A number of scholars have also conducted sensory studies of combat sports and the martial arts, highlighting how practitioners touch, see, smell, taste, hear and feel combat. Wacquant (2004, p. 71), for example, provides an in-depth account of young apprentice boxers, revealing the "sensuous intoxication" that constitutes a core experience for them. Likewise, Downey (2005) reveals how, in capoeira, fighters use sound and other senses to move in rhythm with the music, and kinaesthetically feel their way through performances. Inspired by the work of these scholars, Spencer (2012b) depicts the carnal dimensions of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). Spencer (2012b) illustrates the temporal and spatial dimensions of an MMA club and the role that sight, and sound plays in how fighters come to know and act within it. The haptic dimension is also prevalent in this process as fighters interact with each other via striking, clinching or grappling on the floor. Regarding the olfactory dimension of combat, Spencer notes how on entering the MMA club:

> …one is struck by a collage of the thick salty odour of sweat and the sweet smell of cleaning products. Initially, this smell was indefinable…but I grew fonder of this distinct odour, insofar it came to be associated with training (Spencer, 2012b, p. 244).

Spencer (2012b) goes on to highlight how the change rooms smell of muscle liniment and sweat; how the mats and fighters' bodies smell of heat and sweat after three hours of grappling or sparring; and how the smell of flatulence seemed to be a constant in the club. The latter, although unpleasant often helping to bond and shape the group as the fighters conformed to each other's humour sensibilities, and the predominant masculine ideas of the club (for example: physicality; violence; domination of others; and the toleration of pain and injury).

The MMA club also exposes fighters to the various tastes of combat (Spencer, 2012b). For example, the taste of the plastic mouthguard ranges from sweet fluoride, to neutral, to bitter and the mundane taste of water is often transformed into something extraordinary during and after gruelling training sessions. It is, however, the salty-iron flavour of blood that truly marks the experience of the MMA club and combat for the fighters, signifying a sense of belonging to the broader MMA community (Spencer, 2012b).

The above examples, which traverse the contexts of running, boxing, combat sports, windsurfing, the outdoors, scuba, and open-water marathon swimming, illustrate the specificity of the senses to various physical cultures (Potter, 2008), and posit the senses as active shapers and bearers of such physical, and sporting cultures (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2014). Given this, we can begin to comprehend that the sensorial revolution to which Howes (2005) refers has begun to infiltrate sport, physical-cultural, and exercise research. The depth and breadth of such infiltration, whilst initially appearing minimal, proves timely, significant, and indeed worthy of further consideration. The senses are clearly becoming of interest to a growing number of scholars, and it is with this body of work that this study looks to engage and contribute to, bringing to the fore the shifted sensorium of competitive swimming. There is, however, one further sensory modality not considered in the above: the perception of pain, to which attention now turns.

2.7.3 Pain

Pain has long been associated with participation in sport, and thus sporting embodiment. Be it the ability to endure, inflict, ignore, or play through pain, sports participants are subjected to it, and in certain sporting and physical cultures impart bodily pain that in other social milieux simply would not be tolerated (Bridel, 2010). Indeed, not only is pain tolerated, but certain forms of pain have come to be highly valorised in many sports and physical cultures.

Pain, according to Strawson (1994), is often defined as an unpleasant sensation that is in contradistinction to pleasure. This basic definition is somewhat problematic, however, as it not only infers and emphasises the pleasure/pain dichotomy, but as Spencer (2012a) also notes, it does not take into account the variance in perceptions of pain and the many ways in which the concept of pain is deployed. Bendelow and Williams (1995, p. 147) drawing from the work of Merleau-Ponty, offer a more encompassing definition of pain not simply as something sensory or somatic but something that is "both physical and emotional, biological and phenomenologically embodied [and] is mediated by culture and thus transcends the mind-body divide." Here there is emphasis on the socially and culturally constructed aspects of pain, which is portrayed as an embodied, physical and emotional experience. As Honkasalo contends, similarly drawing on Merleau-Ponty's insights:

> Pain as an embodied experience is constituted in the knots of existential, social, and cultural structures, as well as bodily processes. The definition echoes Merleau-Ponty's thinking, and indeed, I would like to add more explicitly to his concept of pain as a mode of being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.79), which, to my understanding, means being neither a first person nor third person phenomenon but a *way* of experiencing and perceiving (Honkasalo, 1998, p. 37, emphasis in original).

Being in pain is thus one way of being in the world; a notion key to a phenomenological approach to pain. This approach views pain as "a lived, embodied, emotional and existential experience" (Bendelow & Williams, 1995, p. 147). Pain, in other words, is much more than purely sensory and can be used to describe not only physical agony but emotional turmoil and spiritual suffering (Leder, 1984-5, 1990), which are often experienced together, shaping experience, social action, and configurations of practice (Spencer, 2012a). For example, when injury strikes, an athlete not only has to manage the physical pain of the injury, but also has to contend with the emotional pain and relative cognitive strain that injury can place upon them (Allen-Collinson, 2005). As Petrie notes:

> …injury is one of the most emotionally and psychologically traumatic things that can happen to an athlete…because athletes are so dependent upon their physical skills and because their identities are so wrapped up in their sport, injury can be tremendously threatening to them (Petrie, 1993, pp. 18-19).

Spencer (2012a) also highlights how when chronically injured, fighters often elicit a narrative of loss or despair, due to their removal from the MMA lifeworld; a point also made by Allen-Collinson (2005) who talks of fear, anger, despair and the oscillating emotions of experience while on the road to recovery from a serious knee injury.

Despite these associated negative connotations of pain, not all pain is necessarily experienced as negative. Bastian, Jetten, Hornsey, and Leknes (2014) and Leknes et al. (2013), for example, pose that pain, in certain contexts, can be associated with positive feelings and consequences. They argue that pain should not be deemed the opposite to pleasure, but a highly ambiguous reference point occasionally bordering on pleasure. For example, within sport and physical cultures Wacquant (2004), speaks of the sensory intoxication and pain and ache of the boxing gym. Howe (2004) refers to 'positive pain' with respect to the structured hardships endured by athletes during training. Monaghan

(2001) similarly discusses the way bodybuilders 'learn to enjoy' non-injurious pain during training, which, he argues is wholly constructive and contributes to the sustainability of bodybuilding as a physical culture. Hughes (2016) also highlights the pleasure of pain and how the ritualistic and masochistic cutting and callusing of his hands while bouldering is as much 'pleasurably painful' as it is 'painfully pleasant'. Hughes (2016) goes on to indicate how this pain subsides over time, fading into the background and becoming the usual 'hum' of bouldering, being surpassed by the pleasures of strength, agility and movement. Calluses that once were the site of acute pain, now prove to be the platform for pleasure. As a result, Hughes' (2016) hands no longer assume a position of 'dys-appearance' (Leder, 1990) but allow for the somatic senses of flow, balance, strength and movement to pervade his consciousness.

Vaittinen (2014), in her detailed phenomenological examination of 'pain as a way of knowing' in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) highlights how different kinds of pain are relevant to MMA practice, and how skills in producing pain are developed in practice, where practitioners often used pain as a signifier of the successful application of a technique; a context that practitioners did not consider violent due to the nature of the activity. Pain thus became a positive learning experience. Additionally, Vaittinen (2014) draws attention to how some practitioners through their daily interactions and experiences with MMA also developed an appreciation of pain as something productive, even comforting, and how this shared knowing of pain is developed through experience, practice and social interaction. Spencer (2012a) too notes how through intense training pain becomes normalised and often experienced at a much lower intensity, allowing fighters to 'push past' things like muscle soreness and manageable injuries.

Of direct relevance to the current study, in marathon swimming, Throsby (2016) speaks of the 'discomfort' and 'good pain' of performance. Swimmers understand pain as a positive part of hard training where they push the limits of their physical capacities, producing physiological and psychological training effects. The discomfort of tired or sore shoulders often relates to an effective swim with fatigued muscles equating to an embodied sign of training progression; a point also raised by the swimmers in this study and discussed further in Chapter 7.

The above examples illustrate how sportsmen and sportswomen negotiate pain and how certain types of pain (without serious injury), such as the pain of suffering in hard training and/or competition, can be deemed positive and are taken as signs of development, progression, and athletic growth. As Crossley (2004a, pp. 53-54) argues, these "sensations that would in most contexts be experienced as uncomfortable and painful, and as such would tend to terminate activity must be (within a range) welcomed".

Additionally, common mantras such as 'no pain, no gain' illustrate just how these sensations are accepted and endured in certain contexts, being seen as necessary for athletic growth and often considered as 'character building'. Several sociological researchers in sport (see Howe, 2004; Nixon, 1992; Young, 2004; Young & White, 1995) have, however, investigated this taken-for-grantedness of pain as a 'normal' and 'accepted' part of participation in sport, as well as placing the dominant ideology of sport as being 'good for your health' under scrutiny. As Safai argues, in-depth investigation into pain and injury in sport is necessary:

> …because of the social processes that normalise pain and injury…but also because of the damaging, potentially devastating, consequences to health and well-being for many people (Safai, 2003, p. 127)."

Nixon (1992), for example, employs social network theory to investigate the risk-pain-injury paradox; a paradox he refers to as 'the culture of risk'. Nixon (1992) notes that 'the culture of risk' rationalises and normalises behaviours that encourage athletes to make light of injuries, ignore pain and therefore take risks in regard to playing hurt. Such behaviours, Nixon (1992) argues, are enforced by coaches and athletic trainers whom he refers to as an athlete's wider 'sportsnet'. Such a network entraps an athlete in a culture of risk where seeking regular and effective medical care is inhibited.

Furthermore, 'cultures of risk' have been connected to the continued construction and (re)production of masculine identities in relation to pain and injury within sporting spaces and beyond. Being able to play through the pain often affords certain athletes a degree of 'athletic capital', a form of social capital intricately connected to, and reinforcing of, the dominant notions of masculinity in sport (e.g. toughness, stoicism) (Curry, 1993; Donnelly & Young, 1988). As Young, White, and McTeer (1994) note, young men are socialized into

thinking and accepting the ideal that *real men* should ignore and conceal pain and injury. Pain and injury are thus often not spoken about for fear of being seen as weak or placing oneself at the risk of deselection. This is obviously problematic especially in the elite sporting arena, where a 'win at all cost' mantra remains the dominant tenet. Such a position has resulted in athletes, both male and female, being expected to play, no matter the risk to health (Sabo, 2004; Young, 2004).

Safai (2003) however finds that despite the continued normalisation of pain and injury there is a desire among the student athletes and athletic trainers within her study to exercise a 'culture of precaution' and 'sensible risk-taking' in regard to getting athletes back on the field after injury. This runs counter to the dominant discourse around a 'culture of risk', she argues, but 'sensible risk taking' seemingly only takes place during the latter stages of rehabilitation, rather than during interactions with relevant staff that occur prior to, or with treatment.

While I agree that pain in sport is still commonly 'normalised' and that such practices can lead to deleterious consequences to an athlete's health, both physical and mental, not all pain is necessarily negative, nor must it necessarily be related to injury (Bale, 2004) as a lot of these earlier sociological works have focused upon. Additionally, many of these projects typically adopt a contextual approach to pain. Such an approach while allowing for a critical, reflective perspective to be taken, does however run the risk of focusing solely on the social and cultural aspects of pain, ignoring the classical medical approach (Loland, 2006). In doing so, a contextual approach may undervalue the role of physical realities and causes of pain, and therefore runs the risk of maintaining a dualist distinction between cultural and classical notions of pain.

As a result, a more holistic understanding of pain has been adopted in the current study, which acknowledges and emphasises the multitude of manifestations and meanings of pain as a phenomenon and recognises its broader socio-cultural and physical cultural components. By thinking of pain in this way and adopting sociological-phenomenology as an analytical approach to examine experiences of pain in the context of swimming, I seek

to investigate pain, portrayed as both good and bad by swimmers, as sensuous, embodied experiences that shape people's lived experience.

Furthermore, the 'positive pain' (Howe, 2004) or 'good pain' (Hanold, 2010; Throsby, 2016) of sport is often welcomed by athletes. As Roessler (2006, p. 43) notes "pain is accepted [in sport], as long as it does not have anything to do with injury" and often is regarded as a necessary, although reluctantly accepted by-product of athletic improvement. This point is also made by Wiese-Bjornstal, Smith, Shaffer, and Morrey (1998, p. 63) who note how sportspeople in general "learn to define sacrifice, risk, pain, and injury as the price one must pay to be a true athlete". Therefore, being able to tolerate, overcome and endure 'positive' or 'good pain' is often not only regarded as a necessary step towards said athletic improvement, but is also seen a pre-cursor to the joys of athletic success (Roessler, 2006). It is to the concept of enduring and/or endurance that I therefore now turn.

2.7.4 Enduring

Defined as the ability to keep going in the face of both corporeal and cognitive pain, discomfort, and suffering endurance and the ability to endure have long been celebrated and highly valorised practices in endurance sports such as triathlon (Atkinson, 2008b), cycling (Austin, 2010), distance running (Bridel, Markula, & Denison, 2016; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2016), high altitude mountaineering (Allen-Collinson, Crust, & Swann, 2018a), ultra-endurance events (Rochat, Gesber, Seifert, & Hauw, 2018), combat sports (Spencer, 2012b) and swimming (McNarry, Allen-Collinson, & Evans, 2019; Throsby, 2016).

Sociologically speaking, endurance, corporeal and cognitive, is not theorised as some innate biologically essential or inherent characteristic. Rather, endurance has to be learnt, developed and refined over time via substantial effort and training, and socially produced in what Allen-Collinson et al. (2018a) term 'endurance work'. Endurance, like other acquired 'body techniques' (Mauss, 1979), 'reflexive body techniques (Crossley, 2004a) or 'habits' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002), is therefore not innate or permanent, and is susceptible to 'decay', for example, when an athlete takes time out of training due to illness or injury. Thus, endurance, and the meanings of endurance are actively constructed by athletes, and 'produced' and communicated via social interaction (Allen-Collinson et al., 2018a).

As Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2016) note, despite a substantial body of sports science literature that examines endurance from a physiological or biomechanical stance, currently there is only a small, although growing, sociological literature on endurance (see Allen-Collinson, 2017; Atkinson, 2008b; Bridel et al., 2016; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2016; Reischer, 2001). Of those apposite to this study, Hockey and Allen-Collinson's (2016) account of 'doing endurance' in distance running provides a flavour of the key elements of endurance and how the running-body and running-mind inter-relate and mutually influence each other. For them, 'doing endurance' is a central component of the ongoing participation in the distance-running lifeworld and more general being-in-the-world. Endurance is thus a process in which the individual runner experiences a particular set of sensations, interprets those sensations so as to make them intelligible and meaningful, and then learns how to deal with them. Encapsulated in the phrase 'digging in' runners set their embodied consciousness to defend themselves from their own frailties in the face of fatigue, discomfort, pain and environmental stressors (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2016).

Similarly, Allen-Collinson et al. (2018a) reveal how high-altitude mountaineers engage purposively with 'endurance work', and in the active 'somatic learning' of endurance. They note how the somatic learning of endurance is never complete as various corporeal and cognitive challenges can arise even in the most hardened and experienced mountaineers. Challenges relating to injury, aging, accidents and confidence in one's own ability and the abilities of others to endure highlight how endurance is "provisional and contingent, requiring ongoing assessment of fitness levels and experiential knowledge"(Allen-Collinson et al., 2018a, p. 14). Additionally, Allen-Collinson et al. (2018a) note how fundamentally inter-related cognitive and corporeal endurance is, highlighting how the mountaineering-body and mountaineering-mind must work together in order to undertake endurance work. Doing endurance and endurance work are thus key elements of the high-altitude mountaineering lifeworld.

In closing this section, I note that adopting a sociological phenomenological approach in this study affords me the opportunity to analyse pain and endurance as a skilled and often tacit understanding developed through experience, and through our active relations with our spatial and social surroundings. Such a position can therefore add to and challenge

some of the long-held understandings of pain and endurance not just as physiologically-grounded but as embodied and often shared or intersubjective experiences. Pain and endurance are not the only intersubjective or intercorporeal experience associated with sporting participation and it is this wider intersubjective and intercorporeal nature of sport that I address in the final section of this chapter.

2.7.5 Intersubjectivity and Intercorporeality

Although the previous sections have dealt with becoming, doing, the senses, and pain and enduring they do all allude to how participation in sport and physical cultures rarely happens in isolation. For many of these physical cultures, human bodies (and other bodies also) coordinate and temporarily fuse with one another in the most meticulous ways, anticipating the movements and actions of others or equipment at great social and material speed. Sporting participation is thus inherently linked to our lived through, situated and intersubjective being-in-the-world.

As a concept, intersubjectivity is one of the most significant contributions of phenomenology in understanding the social network of relations that constitute and give rise to human experience (McLaughlin & Torres, 2012). Developed in Husserl's (1960, 1973) later works and advanced by other phenomenologists, intersubjectivity has allowed for the illumination of a number of characteristics central to the entire scope of human participation in the world, especially the recognition of the role of the body (McLaughlin & Torres, 2012). For, as Merleau-Ponty (2002) notes, the body is the ground of intersubjective experience, and "it is through my body that I understand other people, just as it is through my body that I perceive 'things'" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 216). Furthermore, it is through a "consummate reciprocity" that our perspectives merge with those of others and we become collaborators for each other in a common world (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 413).

Intersubjectivity, for Merleau-Ponty, therefore relies on a reciprocity of perception. This reciprocity is encapsulated in Merleau-Ponty's concept of reversibility (explored earlier in this chapter; see section 2.5.3) which dissolves any clear distinction between touching and touched, sentient and sensible, and thus between the body as subject and the body as object (Purser, 2017, 2019). Understanding intersubjectivity in this way enables us to grasp

how Merleau-Ponty saw the nature of our being as socially situated and to appreciate that his phenomenology is not limited in its focus on the introspective, singular world of the subject. For Merleau-Ponty, we are engaged with other lived bodies in an embodied manner from birth. Human intersubjectivity, and thus society itself, for Merleau-Ponty is an intertwining of 'flesh', an overlapping of sentient-sensible beings (Crossley, 1995b) in a body-mind-world. The flesh of my body, that is both sentient and sensible, is thus essentially part of the flesh (or fabric) of the world. As a result, Merleau-Ponty draws attention to the carnality and embodiment of intersubjectivity in what he terms intercorporeality. We are therefore all part of the same reversible flesh of the world, where we intertwine with each other in a shared world. Our intersubjectivity thus has an aspect that is bodily and 'enfleshed', and thus intercorporeal (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2017). As Dillon notes:

> …to be human is to be a human body and exhibit human behavior; since both body and behavior are public and visible, I can see your humanity and you can see mine. My body is the ground of my identity for myself, hence it can function as the ground of my identity for others, and your body plays the same role for you, me, and the others who dwell in our world. Furthermore, the isomorphism of our bodies provides a basis for mutual understanding: I understand the behavior of your hands as I see them from the outside because my hands are similar to yours and I know them from the inside (Dillon, 1988, p. 113).

In framing the theoretical orientation for this study, it is therefore crucial to understand that for Merleau-Ponty (2002), experience and practice are not about individuals acting alone, but that through our embodiment we are all interwoven into the same common world. As Crossley (2012, p. 142), following Merleau-Ponty, argues "our world is a social world and our embodied being is a process involving constant interactions with others, whose actions we both affect and are affected by…". We do not, therefore, merely exist in the world. We are constructed through our relationship with it. As Schütz (1970) noted, as actors within a lifeworld, we are embedded within its social structure and cultural milieux, where meaning and knowledge arise from the 'here-and-now' of our daily lived experience but are framed by a wider socio-cultural context. As a result, our knowing and understanding are always situated within the worlds we inhabit and emerge out of the intersubjective and intercorporeal relations we have with other embodied beings, as well

as objects, the environment and the physical space we occupy (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007).

In sporting cultures, examples of intersubjectivity and intercorporeality are abundant and include for example: the linking of arms and pressing together of bodies in rugby; the lifting of bodies and the sensing of tension in acrobatic teams; and the auditory coordinative calls of players in team sports (Meyer & van Wedelstaedt, 2017). Importantly for this study it should be emphasized that it is not just team sports where intersubjective and intercorporeal experiences can be found. As Wacquant (2004) argues, even in individual sports such as boxing, experience is inherently collective, illustrating the close corporeal cooperation between coaches and fighters as they coach, learn, spar and compete. Vaittinen (2014) too argues how, in MMA, practitioners are reliant on another practitioner, be that a training partner or opponent, in order for techniques and skills to be executed. Skills and techniques are inherently intersubjective as one fighter cannot execute a specific technique unless their opponent's position makes that technique possible. Skills and techniques are, therefore, not performed in isolation but together. This position was also advanced by Spencer (2012b), who notes how gyms bring fighters and trainers together, learning and transferring body techniques so that they can 'coproduce' the fighter's body. Spencer (2012b, pp. 232-233) describes having to "try and time the rhythm of his [opponent's] hands so that he can get in a few shots of his own", and how the "rhythm of his opponent's hands" (among other things) has contributed to how he "came to comprehend and know the sport of MMA". When describing the rhythm of the fight, he notes how bodies move in a way that is "reminiscent of a dance" as they use each other's movements and bodily cues to sense action. Combatants "feel when to move, a touch sensitivity that is built up over time and practice. Not only must fighters have a heightened sense of their own bodies, but they must also feel their way through the body of their opponents" (Spencer, 2012b, p. 240), highlighting again the intercorporeal nature of this sporting arena. Crossley (2004a) also demonstrates how the intercorporeal order of the gym circuit class is assisted by music. Although not guaranteed, the music offers beats e.g. in a pattern of 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, etcetera, that allow actions to be integrated and agents to 'mutually tune' to one another. Agents, however, must still decide which beat counts as

the first beat in order to successfully execute movements correctly and in time with one another.

In their running research, Allen-Collinson and Hockey (2017) show how distance runners 'tune in' to one another and coordinate their actions via a constant sensitivity to each other's physical signs and signifiers, for example, the sound of their footfall or breathing. Through repeated training sessions, they highlight how endurance running takes on a sensory cooperativity where participants learn to know their partners' and other runners' 'running body' and thus establish a mode of what Meyer and van Wedelstaedt (2017) refer to as 'we-running'. Similarly, Allen-Collinson and Hockey (2015) describe their running routes as an interactional and intersubjective co-production. While running a certain urban route they have to negotiate various physical and social features encountered, both visually and also via other elements of the sensorium. They are not running in isolation but sharing with each other a habitual and deeply sensory engagement with a specific place inhabited by and shared with others.

In aquatic activities, Evans et al. (2017) examine how mothers with children under the age of four manage their children's bodies in swimming, focusing on the spatial, sensory and intercorporeal elements of these experiences. For example, should a child present 'goose-pimples' as a sign of being cold, mothers would not only be able to see/feel these upon the child's skin, but they understand experientially, via a shared experience of thermoception, the feeling and significance of having goose pimples and the related feelings of being cold. In a form of 'somatic empathy' mothers are therefore able to 'tune-in' to their child's corporeality through an intuitive 'shared' engagement with the world and others.

As a final example, Purser (2008) and Ravn (2016a) both highlight dancing as an intersubjective and intercorporeal experience in which there exists a dynamic connection of two bodies that are able to sense one another's movement. Dancers, by adopting an openness to one another, come to develop connections with each other through movement and working closely together. For example, one participant in Ravn's (2016a) study notes how he is able to sense and feel the movement of his partner within his own torso, signifying a specific kind of connection to his partner. Another participant notes how,

during ‘a good dance’, they are “also in her [their partners’] body” (Ravn, 2016a, p. 126). In doing so Ravn (2016a) argues how tango dancing is not reduced to a spatio-temporal system of actions between two individuals but is, as emphasised by Manning (2009, cited in Ravn, 2016a) the ‘coupling or conjoining’ of sensing, moving bodies. Additionally, Purser (2017, p. 54) notes how dancing with someone else “involves a form of connection or communication which is achieved without words and through the medium of bodily contact”. In such a situation, dancers can react to one another’s bodies at a pre-reflective level, as bodies overlap in an intercorporeal connection that allows dancers to understand other dancers physically in terms of movement, but also “develop a sense of closeness, connection or communion at a human, mental or emotional level…a kinaesthetic empathy” formed in the context of joint artistic expression (Purser, 2017, p. 7).

As each of these examples, and those in the previous sections show, phenomenology not only generates insights into human sporting and exercising embodiment and experience in general, but also paves the way for us to understand human experience as intersubjective and intercorporeal. In doing so, phenomenology provides a powerful means of examining the ways in “which our minds and bodies share the world, interact, socially relate and mutually influence, in particular sporting and exercise contexts” (Allen-Collinson, 2016, p. 20). Despite these examples, however, and the publication of an edited collection by Meyer and van Wedelstaedt (2017), intersubjectivity and intercorporeality remain under-explored generally within the study of sport and physical cultures. This study therefore aims to contribute to this body of work and show how the analytical potential of phenomenology might be further developed in this area.

The previous sections also illustrate how phenomenology can combine with sociological perspectives to generate, as Allen-Collinson (2011a, p. 303) argues, “a powerful additional analytic element to more ‘traditional’ phenomenology” allowing the structurally, politically and ideologically influenced, historically specific and socially situated nature of human embodiment and experience (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2011), and the intersectionality of identities and indeed the centrality of relationships within “human (inter)existence” (Adams, 2007, p. 24) to be addressed. Sociological-phenomenology thus sharpens the focus upon our corporeal embeddedness within cultural and social worlds where bodies are

acknowledged as gendered, classed, sexually oriented, aged, 'raced', with varying degrees of dis/ability and corporeal variation (Allen-Collinson, 2011a).

As alluded to earlier in this review, however, it should be remembered that sociology and phenomenology do not always combine easily, and research employing this and other forms of 'empirical' phenomenology has been met with some controversy. Martínková and Parry (2011), for example, as philosophers are especially critical of this combination, noting that some of this research does not engage with phenomenology, or phenomenological writers and is therefore more phenomenographic or phenomenalistic in nature. Halák, Jirásek, and Nesti (2014) continue this argument by highlighting that although various authors may have the ambition to uncover the 'essential structures' of phenomena they succeed only in describing empirical subjective or objective 'phenomena'.

Nonetheless, it is hoped that this review highlights how incorporating insights from sociology can offer a 'sociologised' form of phenomenology that problematizes the search for 'universal' experience devoid of any recognition of, or analytic attention to, the specificities of lived experience engendered by, for example, age, gender, ethnicity or degree of dis/ability, which are so central for sociologists (Allen-Collinson, 2016). Sociological-phenomenology therefore can provide a:

> …powerful theoretical and methodological synthesis that *demands* that researchers fundamentally and systematically challenge taken-for-granted definitions, interpretations and meanings…cohering strongly with a sociological enterprise that similarly seeks to contest every day, 'common-sense' conceptualisations (Allen-Collinson, 2016, p. 17, emphasis in original).

Thus, bringing a sociological lens to bear on insights drawn from phenomenology allows us to analyse the considerable impact of socio-structural forces upon our lived, embodied sporting experience (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2016). How this was achieved in the current project is the focus of the methodological chapter that follows.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter I have provided a review of the relevant literature to this study. I began by detailing sociology's relationship with the body, discussing how the body and embodiment have shifted from a position of 'absent-presence' within sociological discourse to now receive considerable attention. I then continue this discussion by illuminating the role of sport and physical cultures in this changing landscape and how phenomenology has played a significant role in this shift. I then go on to outline the parameters of the phenomenological orientation that provides the relevant theoretical underpinning and conceptual framework for this study. Such an approach guides the way I will approach the swimmer's experiences as embodied, situated, intersubjective and intercorporeal. I then provide some examples of how phenomenology and phenomenologically-inspired analysis have contributed to sport and exercise research with particular reference to how we come to inhabit certain lifeworld's, the senses, and the intersubjectivity or intercorporeality of such experiences. By adopting this theoretical framework, it allows for the phenomenon of competitive swimming to be investigated from the practitioner's perspective. The following chapter outlines the methodological considerations for this thesis.

Chapter 3: Methodology – 'The Warm Up and Prep-set'

3.1 Introduction

The 'warm up and prep-set(s)' in a swimming training session are an important step as they provide an opportunity for the swimmers to prepare physiologically and psychologically for the 'main set(s)' that follow. This chapter therefore acts as the 'warm-up and prep-set' for this study and much in the same way that a swimming 'warm-up and prep-set' should be aligned to the purpose of the training session, the research approach and methods chosen in this research project should be congruent with the research purpose**.** In this chapter I therefore outline the methodological approach and method techniques selected for this study, beginning with a brief outline of the underlying philosophical paradigms and the phenomenological approach. This approach subsequently informs how the various methods were appropriately selected and employed to satisfy the aims of this project. Ethical considerations are also addressed, and I describe how the data were analysed and represented as well as introducing the reader to the place and space of ANP Swimming.

3.2 Paradigms: From Positivism to Phenomenology

All research is underpinned by various philosophical foundations based on assumptions about how the world is perceived, and how one can best come to understand that world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). These philosophical foundations are known as paradigms (Kuhn, 1962), which form an overarching set of beliefs that orientate how researchers view the nature of being and reality (ontology) and how this view affects various judgements about, and how to gain knowledge (epistemology) (Markula & Silk, 2011). As Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) and Sparkes and Smith (2014) note, different paradigms lead researchers to generate different questions, develop different research designs, use different data collection techniques, perform different analyses, use differing ways to represent their data, and judge the quality of studies against different criteria. Paradigms therefore are fundamental as they guide all aspects of undertaking research, providing:

> …the boundaries for the researcher's ethics and values, actions in the social world, the control of the study (who initiates the work, and asks questions), the voices deployed in the accounts of the research and, indeed, the very basic and fundamental understanding of the world the researcher is investigating (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 25).

Each paradigm can be understood in terms of certain ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. Ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions, which in turn have methodological implications for the choices made regarding techniques of data collection, the interpretation of data, and how data are represented and written up. Table 3.1 outlines some of the basic assumptions of three key paradigmatic frameworks typically used in sport and exercise research.

Table 3.1 Basic assumptions of most commonly used paradigms in sport and exercise research (adapted from Lincoln et al., 2011)

Consideration	Positivist	Post-Positivist	Interpretivist
Ontology What is the nature of reality (Creswell 2007)	Realists Belief in a single identifiable reality	Critical realists Belief in a single reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable	Relativism Local and specific co-constructed realities
Epistemology What is the relationship between researcher and that being researched (Creswell, 2007)	Dualist/objectivist: There is no reason to interact with whom or what the researchers study	Modified dualist/objectivist; tradition/community: findings probably true	Subjectivist: Findings are the creation of the process of interaction between inquirer and inquired into.
Methodology What is the process of research? (Creswell, 2007)	Experimental / manipulative: verification of hypotheses	Modified experimental / manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses	Hermeneutical / dialectical.
Methods What research techniques/tools are employed	Chiefly quantitative methods. Statistical analyses	Quantitative and qualitative methods	Chiefly qualitative methods

Of these paradigms, positivism has traditionally been the prevailing choice in sport and exercise science research (Kerry & Armour, 2000), often resulting in the subordination of other paradigms. Positivism, is primarily based on etic, formal, and standardised research

employing quantitative methods to predict and control the research process, seeking an objective truth obtained through the rigorous testing of hypotheses. As such, a positivist epistemology is centred on controlled data collection, where researchers generally distance themselves from the phenomena under investigation, seeking a reality that is measurable and objective, devoid of their opinions construed as a universal truth (Markula & Silk, 2011).

While this traditional positivist approach has without doubt been successful, one of its major limiting factors is positivism's inability to engage with the more complex, interchanging, subjective and individuality of human nature (Markula & Silk, 2011). For those wishing to undertake this type of research an alternative approach is required. That approach is often the interpretivist paradigm.

The interpretivist paradigm stands almost in direct opposition to the objective and value-neutral positivist paradigm, underscored by very different ontological and epistemological assumptions as outlined in Table 3.1. It is a paradigm founded on the very idea that the social world is complex, where people, including researchers and research participants, ascribe their own meaning(s) to an event, experience or happening (Markula & Silk, 2011). The aim of any interpretive project is therefore to gain an understanding of these meanings by gathering knowledge of multiple individual experiences (Markula & Silk, 2011) including beliefs, values, reasons and understandings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Researchers as a result cannot be distant, disembodied, objective scientists (Gould & Nelson, 2005) but must allow, acknowledge and integrate subjective, embodied experiences into their research (Tillman-Healy & Keisinger, 2001).

The interpretivist paradigm has thus been dominated by qualitative methodological procedures, generally drawing on interviewing as a major method of data collection (Amis, 2005), allowing the researcher to explore the contextual nature of human interactions (Hammersley, 1989). As Denzin and Lincoln note, qualitative research is a:

> …situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and

> memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 3).

In this respect, the 'truth' is not conceptualised as being universal and absolute, but as multiple, partial, and necessarily incomplete (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research thus attempts to "recognise the fluid and intricate interactions between people and the socio-historical worlds in which they exist" (Silk, 2005, p. 5). The interpretivist, qualitative researcher's main aim is therefore to study phenomena as far as possible in their 'natural' setting in order to understand the participant's subjective experiences.

Based on this understanding of the interpretivist paradigm, and the aims of this study, the interpretivist paradigm would offer a logical choice for situating this research. However, as detailed in Chapter 2, this study engages with phenomenology and contrary to many research method texts (for example; Lincoln et al., 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011) phenomenology is not synonymous with, or even subsumed under, the interpretivist paradigm or 'qualitative' research approaches, as has been noted (Allen-Collinson, 2016; Martínková & Parry, 2011).

Phenomenology differs radically from traditional interpretivist and/or qualitative research in that its main concern, as Gallagher and Zahavi (2008) emphasise, is not with a subjective account of experience, but an account of subjective experience. Phenomenology is therefore not simply a retelling of subjective experience but is more concerned with our experience of that experience. As Allen-Collinson (2016) further argues, to 'qualify' as phenomenological, a study must go beyond providing a description, however detailed and well-grounded, of the subjective experience of phenomena, as this latter would constitute phenomenalism, and phenomenology is *not* phenomenalism (see also Halák et al., 2014). For Allen-Collinson (2016), phenomenology is thus not concerned with recounting the immediate, subjective experiences of a particular person/persons as lived in everyday life, but rather about fundamentally problematizing that 'everydayness', and seeking to 'stand aside' from the everyday flow of subjective experiences and taken-for-granted ways of

thinking and being, i.e. our 'natural attitude'. A phenomenological researchers' central concern is therefore to return to embodied experiential meanings, and to question how these come to be experienced. This process involves both rich description of the phenomenon or phenomena, and the researcher adopting the phenomenological attitude (Finlay, 2009) via what is termed the phenomenological epochē (see section 3.4).

Additionally, as noted in Chapter 2, phenomenology emphasises the link between mind and body and as such rejects the ontological extremes of both subjectivism and objectivism (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). Although tasked with investigating phenomena as they are experienced, experience is never purely subjective as the person having said experience is never isolated from the world around them. The same world is also never a fixed objective reality, to which we as humans have direct, pre-interpreted access. Thus, as Moran (2000, p. 15) notes, in phenomenology "subjectivity must be understood as inextricably involved in the process of constituting objectivity". Phenomenology thus challenges the notion of subjective/objective dichotomies and such a position means that to study something phenomenologically means that it cannot be studied in an atomistic way (Webster-Wright, 2010). For some theorists, such a conceptualisation thus firmly places phenomenology as 'another way' distinct from the positivist or interpretivist paradigms.

Furthermore, whilst it is important for all researchers to be aware of the various assumptions that underlie their chosen research paradigm, researchers employing phenomenology must also be clear about which phenomenological tradition they are following, given the often-nuanced differences between some of the traditions. For example, a study that purports to be Husserlian, but does not engage with the epochē, would immediately raise concerns about its currency as phenomenological. For those who have taken some of the insights of philosophical phenomenology and tried to apply these to empirical studies of lifeworlds, phenomenology is not just a philosophical approach but also a methodology (Finlay, 2009; Kerry & Armour, 2000). A strong phenomenological study will therefore select methods that appropriately link to the phenomenological perspective being used.

In light of this, several attempts have been made to trace the general principles of the phenomenological process (for example Giorgi, 1985; van Manen, 1997). As part of this process Giorgi (1989, 1997) identifies description, intentionality, epochē, and essences as fundamental elements in many forms of phenomenological enquiry. It is this phenomenological method and these core characteristics that I now consider.

3.3 Phenomenology as Method

The question of "what is phenomenology?" was asked by Merleau-Ponty (2002) at the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Perception,* and phenomenology is still seen today as multifaceted, complex and evolving. The effect is that phenomenological research can take many forms and the debate continues within the social sciences as to what constitutes 'true' phenomenological research (Caelli, 2001; Giorgi, 2000). This is in part because phenomenology is both a theoretical, as well as a methodological approach to studying experience (Kerry & Armour, 2000). The previous chapter discussed the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology associated with this study; this section highlights phenomenology as a methodological approach drawing particularly from Giorgi's (1989, 1997, 2009) descriptive phenomenological method.

3.3.1 Principles of Phenomenological Research

The 'phenomenological method' is, however, not really a method *per se*, at least not in the traditional meaning of a research method, for example interviewing. Instead the phenomenological method is more of an approach that embraces a whole way of thinking and being; a whole worldview or *Weltanschauung*; a way of thinking that is characterised by an attitude of openness, curiosity and a sense of wonderment; the phenomenological attitude (Allen-Collinson, 2009, 2016).

The phenomenological attitude can be understood by contrasting it with phenomenologists term the 'natural attitude' of everyday life. Within the natural attitude, the world is as Schütz and Luckmann (1973, p. 4) note "taken for granted and self-evidently real" where we do not question many features of our world. As Merleau-Ponty (2002, p. xv) maintains, however, in order for us to see the world phenomenologically we need to "break with our familiar acceptance of it", taking a step back, temporarily allowing us to

watch with wonder the mysteries and paradoxes of the world. This requires a suspension (as far as possible) of our 'adult' knowledge and preconceptions to once again allow us to gaze upon the world with fresh, naïve eyes in order "to provide rich, textured detailed descriptions of phenomena as they are lived and experienced by participants in actual concrete situations without an overemphasis on accounting for and theorising these" (Allen-Collinson, 2011b, p. 51). How this is done in empirical phenomenology is neither easily described nor practiced, especially as the different strands of phenomenology have their own distinctive ethos and principles. Giorgi (1985, 1997, 2009), however, notes that there are certain core characteristics, or qualities, derived from Husserlian phenomenology that can provide researchers with a helpful guiding structure for employing the phenomenological approach. These core characteristics are:

i. Intentionality. A key Husserlian concept critically developed by Merleau-Ponty, intentionality highlights how consciousness is always conscious of something; it is thus intentional, directed towards someone or something (object or idea), so that intentionality brings said thing into frame. As Sokolowski (2000, p. 8) notes "[e]very act of consciousness, every experience, is correlated with an object. Every intending has its intended object". It is thus argued, that a thing must present itself to us as something recognisable within our schema of the world, for it to be perceived and recognised at all. Intentionality allows us to explain how the same things can be experienced very differently by different people. Allen-Collinson (2016) uses the example of being out running and perceiving a dark shadow as a bear, while her running partner perceives the same dark shadow as a deer. As a result, their corporeal reactions to the same dark shadow will be very different. For Merleau-Ponty (2002) intentionality has two forms: *intentionality of acts*, when we consciously and actively take up a position; and *operative intentionality*, a form of pre-reflective intentionality, a tacit, background noise to our lives which can only be 'placed in the light' via the phenomenological reduction (Allen-Collinson, 2016).

ii. Epochē, bracketing and eidetic reduction. As Nesti (2004, p. 41) notes "phenomenology requires the researcher and the subject[5] to maintain their penetrating gaze at the

[5] 'participant' would be the more usual term in sociological-phenomenology

phenomenon under consideration, *without* moving off target and starting to try and *account* for its existence". In order to focus this penetrating gaze, descriptive phenomenologists following Husserl's (1983, 1999) exhortation 'to return to the things themselves', attempt to suspend as far as possible their own 'natural attitude'. This 'attitudinal suspension' (Zahavi, 2018) is sought via the process of epochē (derived from the Greek: to stand aside from, or keep a distance from), via which phenomenologists aim temporarily to set aside their tacit assumptions about a phenomenon, for example, competitive swimming. This methodological step allows them to approach said phenomenon freshly, without prejudgment, seeking to cut through the layers of received knowledge, ideas and assumptions that envelop it in both every day and 'scientific' thinking (McNarry et al., 2019), to arrive at and describe the essential characteristics of said phenomenon (Allen-Collinson, 2016). With the natural attitude suspended (as far as possible) via epochē, eidetic reduction is used to make sense of what remains, to reduce the phenomenon to an exemplar of an essence or an *eidos* (Giorgi, 1997; Langdridge, 2017). Husserl's notion of the epochē has however been criticised by those working from an existential or hermeneutic position, due to the inherent idealism in Husserl's notion of the transcendental ego and the ability to completely bracket out the world and *all* personal assumptions, preconceptions and interpretations. In the present study, as it is for others working with sociological phenomenology, I am in agreement with Merleau-Ponty (2002) that the full epochē is an impossibility as we can never fully remove ourselves from our culture/social structure. We can however, via the epoche, make best efforts reflexively to be aware of our assumptions and standpoints, and to render these explicit (Allen-Collinson, 2009). Although complete bracketing is thus an impossibility, Husserl's notion of epochē is useful as it can encourage a more self-critical and reflective approach to research to be adopted. A detailed description of how the epochē was engaged with in this study is presented in section 3.4.

iii. Description. Given the significance of the relationship between perceiver and perceived in phenomenology, description is never a merely abstract recording of phenomena devoid of reference to the person perceiving and recording them (Allen-Collinson, 2009). While all phenomenology is descriptive in the sense of aiming to describe rather than explain, differing phenomenological traditions do distinguish between descriptive versus

interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology (Finlay, 2009). For those who follow a Husserlian approach with its aim to 'go back to the things themselves' (*zu den Sachen selbst)*, description involves portraying the essential core characteristic(s) and meaning(s) of an experience without resorting to more abstract intellectualisation and theorisation. However, for many phenomenologists who followed in Husserl's footsteps, including Merleau-Ponty, attaining Husserl's level of 'pure' description was deemed an impossibility (Allen-Collinson, 2009, 2016). Alternatively, for those who follow a Heideggerian, hermeneutic stance, were "the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 37), interpretation is seen as an inescapable, and inevitable part of human *Dasein, of* our being-in-the-world. To Heidegger we experience a thing as something that has already been interpreted (Finlay, 2009). There is of course, as many would argue, no hard or fixed boundaries between description and interpretation and it is thus more apt to employ a descriptive-interpretive continuum, as neither 'pure' description or interpretation would makes sense within many forms of phenomenology (Finlay, 2009; Giorgi, 1997). Such a dichotomy, should it exist, would also be in opposition to the open, non-dualistic thinking that underpins phenomenology as a philosophy and methodology.

iv. Essences: For Husserl (1965, pp. 5-6) a central aim of phenomenology was the discovery of the universal essences of experience, in order to create a "systematic and disciplined methodology for the derivation of knowledge". An essence is the *sine qua non* of a thing but is often misunderstood as a concept. As Giorgi (1997, p. 240) argues "the term essence has a negative connotation in scientific circles, but for Husserl it does not refer to Platonic substances nor simply to word analyses". Rather an essence is best described as the essential meaning(s) of an object, without which it would cease to be recognisable to the perceiver as that particular phenomenon (Giorgi, 1997). For existential or sociological phenomenologists, however, any universality of existence of essences outside of sociocultural frameworks is highly problematic (Allen-Collinson, 2016). The 'essence' is therefore more about seeking generalities or typical structures as opposed to making a definitive statement about its invariance (Allen-Collinson, 2011b).

These then are the core characteristics within the philosophical phenomenological approach, as illuminated by Giorgi (1989, 1997). Giorgi (1985, 1997) additionally offers a way of operationalising phenomenology in order to satisfy these characteristics. Giorgi's approach is widely used in empirical phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994) and its strength lies not only in its grounding in phenomenological foundations but in Giorgi's focus on seeking and analysing people's experiences whilst still remaining faithful to the full complexity of the participants' descriptions (Giorgi, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2010). It is for this reason that the current study draws influence from Giorgi's (1985, 1997) approach that advocates:

1. the collection of concrete descriptions of phenomena from an insider perspective;
2. the adoption of the phenomenological attitude;
3. initial impressionistic readings of the descriptions in order to gain a feel for the whole;
4. in-depth re-reading of these descriptions as part of a lengthy process of data immersion, to identify themes and sub-themes; and
5. the production of general statements of the essential patterns or structure(s) of the experiences.

Although originally devised to investigate psychological phenomenon, others have noted that it can also be applied to the study of sociological and sporting phenomena (for example: Allen-Collinson, 2009; Kerry & Armour, 2000; Ravn & Høffding, 2017), and any method that can provide rich, in-depth, detailed descriptions of participants own concrete, subjective lived experiences, has the potential to generate data to which phenomenologically inspired analysis can be applied. For example, phenomenological analyses have been applied to data derived from a wide spectrum of methods including semi-structured interviews and autoethnography. The methodological tools that have been selected as appropriate to this study will be detailed later in this chapter (see sections 3.4 - 3.7), but for now it should be cautioned that any tight prescription of method(s) would run counter to the open nature of phenomenology. Phenomenology is highly complex, constituted of several different strands meshed together in a tangled web (Ehrich, 1999) and as Mortari and Tarozzi (2010, p. 9) note "there is no place for phenomenological orthodoxy, or for so-called purism". With this in mind, what Giorgi offers is not a rigid methodological step by step process to be followed strictly, but a set of guiding principles to be shaped according to the needs of the project**.** Figure 3.1 therefore shows how these

guiding principles were adapted and used within this current project, highlighting the cyclical nature of the approach, where much to-ing and fro-ing between steps was required in order to effectively engage with data collection and analysis.

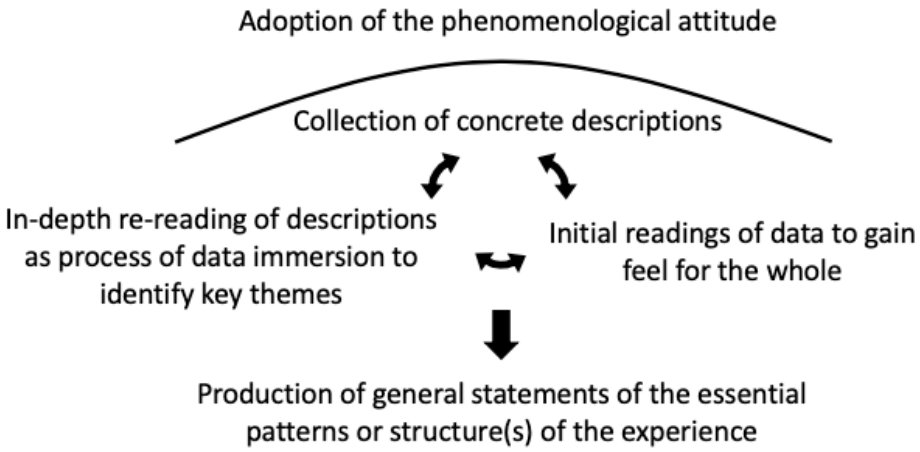

Figure 3.1 Adapted Version of Giorgi's (1997) Phenomenological Approach

Figure 3.1 also highlights the adoption of the phenomenological attitude as the first and main overarching step in the process of doing phenomenology in this way, and it is this process that the following section describes.

3.4 Adopting the Phenomenological Attitude

As the previous section details, adopting the phenomenological attitude via the process of epochē or bracketing is a core characteristic of phenomenological research. Adopting the phenomenological attitude is, however, no easy feat for researchers to achieve, and was made even more challenging by my position as a sociologist engaging in phenomenological inspired research. This position emphasises how we can never completely stand outside of our socio-cultural and socio-structural situatedness. As a sociological researcher, theories and concepts are already in mind, socialised into me as an academic. These can therefore never be neutral, 'unknowing' or value-free. I am therefore in full agreement with Merleau-Ponty (1968, p. 178) who highlights the impossibility of any complete epochē. It is, however, possible to make best efforts to 'stand back' and maintain a critical perspective and analytic distance on my assumptions and preconceptions, being reflexive and self-critical towards these. What I therefore focus on in the following section are the steps that I took in order to challenge some of my own personal physical-cultural knowledge about,

and experiences of, competitive swimming and coaching, in an effort to illustrate how I engaged with the process of 'reflexive bracketing' (Ahern, 1999) within the familiar lifeworld of competitive swimming (see also McNarry et al., 2019). I should also stress at this stage that what follows is not a rigid formulation for undertaking bracketing, it is simply how I engaged with this task in the current research project. Additionally, even though each process has been presented separately, in effect they also worked together synergistically throughout the duration of the project, both outside and inside the field/pool.

3.4.1 Epochē and Bracketing in Competitive Swimming

Having been both a competitive swimmer and swimming coach, my level of familiarity with the competitive swimming lifeworld afforded me the position of what Evers (2006) and Wheaton (2002) describe as a 'cultured insider'. This position on the one hand helped me to gain access to my research site and its inhabitants but on the other raised challenges regarding engaging with the task of bracketing. This task was, however, started early in the research project due to the differing levels, or degrees of insiderness, within my supervisory team. Adam, as a former competitive swimmer, was able to draw upon memories centring on the experience of the swimming lifeworld, particularly the heavy training workloads and sensory elements, with these 'magnified moments' (Hochschild, 2003) still being evocatively 'felt' even though Adam had not competed in over a decade. Discussions within the team 'brought back' many of these memories, whilst his embodied knowledge of the sport allowed him to act as a critical sounding board for myself.

Contrasting with, but also complementing Adam's insider position, was Jacquelyn, who despite some youthful forays into the water considered herself a complete outsider to the swimming lifeworld. This position afforded her the opportunity to pose 'naïve' questions to Adam and myself when our vivid recollections of the swimming lifeworld piqued her phenomenological and/or sociological interest and curiosity. As an inhabitant of a very different physical-cultural lifeworld, that of endurance running, Jacquelyn was able to draw upon and compare her sporting lifeworld with that of competitive swimming. These discussions proved extremely interesting and helped to challenge some of our tacit and taken for granted assumptions regarding both endurance sport lifeworlds.

In addition to these bracketing discussions, I undertook a series of what have been termed 'automethodological self-elicited reflections' (McNarry et al., 2019) on my experiences of the swimming lifeworld. Having not been involved with competitive swimming as an athlete since my early twenties, I 'returned to the water' to conduct a swim training session and post-swim reflection. In doing so I was able to reconnect with my swimming self and to contrast my present self and embodied swimming capabilities with those of my 'former gloried self' (Adler & Adler, 1989). The following extracts from my reflective notes evidence not only the unfamiliarity in the sensations that I experienced, where my body and specific body parts 'dys-appeared' (Leder, 1990), but also illuminate the unexpected pleasure of somatic aliveness and 'intense embodiment' (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015):

> I enter the last 15m of the 50m, and I can feel my hands starting to ache. Muscles have been working at their maximum capacity for 35m and the tingling starts in the tips of my fingers. It's like lots of little pins being stuck into my skin and it's starting to spread…I fully expected that perhaps my triceps or shoulders would tighten but they feel ok. This is strange to me (Reflexive note, 1st June 2017).

> [As I finish the 50] I become overtly aware of my beating heart and gasping breaths. I find the sensations oddly pleasurable and discomforting at the same time. Pleasurable due to feeling alive, feeling my heart pulsing fast…knowing that freshly oxygenated blood is being moved around my body…but also, I feel discomforted. I don't consider myself to be an unfit or unhealthy individual, yet here I am after 50m of fast swimming, gasping for air and hanging on the end of the pool like I've just completed the most gruelling training set ever. It's frustrating because these things used to come so easily [and] here I am feeling drained after only 50m (Reflexive note, 1st June 2017).

Both of these extracts highlight the mismatch between my present-day corporeal experiences and those of my 'former gloried' [swimming] self' (Adler & Adler, 1989) in terms of what I considered as 'normal' and anticipated swimming sensations. In doing so, this process helped me to reconnect with and identify what my assumptions regarding 'normal' swimming-body sensations were.

Armed with this refreshed knowledge, I then dug out and dove into some key swimming texts, old training logs and notes as a way of elicitating further reflection on my own assumptions and preconceptions regarding swimming and swimming coaching. I then proceeded to record these reflections via video and audio-recording software. This process

in itself threw up some challenges as the video recording software kept crashing and, in the end, I resorted to simply recording via audio. These reflections were undertaken before each data immersion period and were deliberately kept open, allowing my thoughts and comments to wander, often revisiting previous lines of thinking as new or other information came to mind. The general topics of self-discussion included: 1) reflections on my career as a swimmer and how these experiences had influenced my coaching style; 2) thoughts on each of the four swimming strokes and their various technical points; 3) periodisation, that is the division of the year into training cycles, and planning for different swimming events and 4) my experiences of working with age-group, youth, and senior athletes, including success, mistakes, and things I may do differently if I ever return to active coaching.

In addition to the three occasions of in-depth elicited self-reflection I also made sustained efforts to enhance reflexivity throughout each data collection period. This was achieved through further video- and audio-recordings, reflecting on what I had observed or experienced during each week of data-collection. These recordings, together with my personal reflective notes recorded within my fieldnotes (see appendices 4 & 5)**,** added another layer of data collection. Furthermore, to help me reflect on each interview in a systematic way I utilised a structured pro-forma to takes notes on my thinking about and with reference to: 1) my relationship with the participant during the interview; 2) my responses to her/his account; 3) how the participant reacted to the questions posed; 4) how I responded to the participant's answers and 5) anything that needed changing, clarified or further developed for subsequent interviews.

Further to these recordings and reflections, there are three other bracketing practices that I engaged with: 1) discussions with other insiders and outsiders to the swimming lifeworld, both male and female, including other coaches, swimming support staff (physiologists, psychologists, nutritionists, strength and conditioning coaches), PhD students and academics from a range of backgrounds including, strength and conditioning, biomechanics, psychology and sociology; 2) attending research seminars and coaching workshops, both swimming and non-swimming related; and 3) reading other ethnographic and autoethnographic, phenomenologically orientated and/or sensory accounts of

different sporting and physical cultures for example, mixed martial arts (Spencer, 2012b; Vaittinen, 2014), bouldering (Hughes, 2016), parkour (Clegg & Butryn, 2012) and marathon swimming (Throsby, 2016).

With regard to points one and two above, having the opportunity to interact with other swimming and non-swimming colleagues, friends and family, brought items to the fore that had not been considered during my initial reflections. To give an example, on attending a PhD course relating to phenomenology and qualitative research methods one of the speakers mentioned the difference between swimming in a short course (25m) pool versus a long-course (50m) pool. This was something that I had not even considered and provides a key example of something that was so familiar to me, constituting part of my *Lebenswelt*. Additionally, while attending a swimming coaches' workshop during my second fieldwork immersion, the speaker presented ideas that fundamentally challenged not only my assumptions but those of the other coaches present in relation to how much, and the type of training that was appropriate for different athletes depending on age and event. This led to further discussions with the coaches at ANP Swimming over the ensuing days in relation to not only the type of training appropriate for the athletes currently in the programme but also the athletes they should be looking to recruit. Similarly, some non-swimming friends, who are coaches in other sports (hockey, rugby, basketball), expressed surprise at the volume of work and intensity of training undertaken by swimmers, questioning if such methods were necessary for performance and/or even healthy for the athletes, thus providing a fundamental challenge to established beliefs and practices long-held within the competitive swimming lifeworld.

It therefore remains for me to reflect on what was achieved via these bracketing and reflexivity-enhancing processes. Firstly, I feel that these steps allowed me to recognise, acknowledge and manage some of the role tensions inherent within the research setting. My complex positionality and the multiple perspectives generated by inhabiting and shifting between three interconnected but distinct roles (swimmer, swimming coach, and researcher), provided several advantages and disadvantages, and required careful reflections and management throughout the research period (see section 3.6.3 for further details on role and its demands and challenges). The pre-fieldwork discussions and

reflections allowed me to enter the research setting having identified and considered some of my pre-existing assumptions and presuppositions in regard to the competitive swimming lifeworld. As a former swimmer and swimming coach, I hold within myself the lived experience, swimming sensorium, embodied memories and technical language with which to relate to other inhabitants of the same lifeworld. Such knowledge and understanding provided me with a more privileged access to the swimming lifeworld from an 'insider' perspective than might have been otherwise possible, and also acted as an analytical fulcrum around which I could conceptualise and analyse the swimmers' experiences.

In closing this section it is therefore pertinent to acknowledge that as is common in much physical-cultural insider research (Allen-Collinson et al., 2018c; Atkinson, 2017; McMahon, Zehntner, & McGannon, 2017), my insider status and experience provided significant advantages with regard to shared inhabitance of the lifeworld of those I was researching. Such deeply embodied knowledge and experience, however, also raised challenges for engaging with the phenomenological epochē, to problematise the tacit and taken-for-granted lifeworlds that we all inhabit in order to subject them to research scrutiny.

Having outlined how the phenomenological epochē was engaged with, the remaining sections of this chapter detail how I collected the necessary concrete descriptions, or as Allen-Collinson (2009, p. 291) refers to these, the "insider experiential knowledge", of the competitive swimming lifeworld. These data can then, in turn, be used to strengthen and further develop phenomenological concepts and descriptions (Ravn, 2016b), for example Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological notions of habit, reversibility and intercorporeality, as well allowing various sociological analysis (e.g. Mauss' Body techniques) to be 'put to work' (Ravn & Christensen, 2014) to provide conceptual clarification to the myriad of phenomena that make up the competitive swimming lifeworld. To engage with this lifeworld, I adopted the use of an ethnographic methodology and its associated methods of participant observation and interviewing in order to generate empirical data which take the form of "rich, in-depth, detailed descriptions of participants' own concrete, lived experiences" (Allen-Collinson, 2016, p. 16), including my own. It is to these processes that I now turn.

3.5 Introduction to Ethnography

A key methodological consideration in any phenomenological project or analysis is being able to generate descriptions of the lived experiences under investigation. It is important these descriptions, the data, are as Ravn (2016b, p. 208) notes "closely related to the way these experiences unfold and take shape in contextualised and truly lived situations." Therefore, the methods selected must provide the opportunity for rich, in-depth, detailed descriptions related to the participants' concrete, lived experiences to be collected.

With this in mind, the qualitative methodology selected for this project consisted of ethnographic fieldwork completed over a twelve-month swimming season, at a British university swimming programme situated in the English Midlands; 'ANP Swimming'. The data were collected through participant observation field notes, 19 semi-structured interviews (12 male and 7 female; average length 75 minutes) with follow-ups, and three group interviews (10 male and 6 female; average length 67 minutes), conducted with a mix swimmers covering different strokes and disciplines[6] (sprint, middle distance, and distance). This approach allowed for the longitudinal study of participants' on-going lived experience, as well as providing opportunities for on-going reflexive work along with some initial data analysis to be conducted during and between the data collection phases as outlined in Table 3.2.

In the remainder of this section I provide a brief overview of ethnography, together with a rationale for the selection of these methods because as Wolcott (2010) notes ethnography's greatest contribution to the research landscape is in its ability to generate purposeful and thorough descriptions; a key characteristic of Giorgi's phenomenological approach as detailed earlier in this chapter (see section 3.3). I then make the case for choosing participant observation and interviewing, as well as detailing how the research process unfolded over the course of the project.

[6] I wanted to include a more detailed breakdown of the swimmers, their strokes and the events they swam, but at the risk of this information leading to the possible identification of the participations the decision was made to omit these details.

Table 3.2 Data Collection Timeline

Date	Steps
February to October 2017	Pre-fieldwork activities
2nd October to 4th November 2017	First data collection immersion including 19 semi-structured individual interviews
November 2017 to January 2018	Transcription of interviews and initial analysis
24th January to 28th February 2018	Second data collection immersion including follow up session with each participant to clarify points from initial interviews
February to June 2018	Continuation of analysis and generation of initial themes
25th June to 21st July 2018	Third data collection immersion and group interviews
August 2018 to July 2019.	Transcription of group interviews, final data analysis, drafting and redrafting of chapters

3.5.1 Ethnography as a Methodology

Eliasoph eloquently captures the relevance of ethnography to this study, stating how:

> In many spheres of life, people can only learn by doing things together, so the sociologists who want to understand meaning making in everyday life have to observe and experience these embodied practices as they unfold in real time and space, and materialise in real bodies (Eliasoph, 2005, p. 160).

Originally associated with anthropologic fieldwork, ethnography has evolved into one of the most established qualitative research methodologies in the social sciences being used by a variety of researchers, with a variety of theoretical approaches (Markula & Silk, 2011). Because of this varied history, however, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 2) argue that ethnography lacks a "standard, well defined meaning". Despite this lack of clarity, ethnography, as an approach or 'style' of research, is often used in the study of people and culture (Brewer, 2000) and loosely refers to the practical steps researchers take to collect data from 'natural', 'real world' settings, from the position of an involved actor (Fetterman, 2010). These steps include gaining access to, and establishing a role and relationships within a research setting to procure information by a variety of means (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) including participant observation, document analysis, and different forms of interviewing. Researchers then interpret their findings depending on their paradigmatic

and theoretical approach (Markula & Silk, 2011) to shed light on to the lives or lifeworlds of a particular group of people (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). As Krane and Baird state:

> Ethnography is aimed toward understanding the culture of a particular group from the perspective of the group members. The group culture, then, will lend insight into the behaviours, values, emotions, and mental states of group members. Ethnographers employ multiple methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social environment and perceptions of the members of the social group (Krane & Baird, 2005, p. 87).

An ethnography, as a result, is often open-ended, unstructured, and quite informal in its nature, but unlike more formalised research approaches an ethnography enables the researcher, where appropriate, and with time, to become immersed behind the scenes observing first-hand, in great depth, a wide variety of interactions, behaviours, and responses to events in, as Angrosino (2007) points out, the search for patterns in lived human experience. In doing so, researchers, as Wolcott (1994, p. 6) notes, position themselves with a view to establishing:

> …what a stranger would have to know in order to understand what is going on here or, more challenging still, what a stranger would have to know in order to be able to participate in a meaningful way (Wolcott, 1994, p. 6).

An ethnographic methodology is therefore seemingly straightforward; become a member of a culture and live alongside them doing what they do in order to achieve an in-depth understanding of their cultural practices and realities (Atkinson, 2016). This is, however, no easy task, and as Sands (2002, p. 20) notes, can involve, "surviving a year or two of fieldwork, complete with the culture shock, loneliness and perils of living away from the familiar." Sands (2002) further warns us that as a result of this ethnography is not for everyone.

Nevertheless, ethnography has been employed extensively in research on sport, exercise and physical cultures over the last thirty years, including, for example, in surfing (Sands, 2002), boxing (Wacquant, 2004), skateboarding (Beal, 1995), snowboarding (Thorpe, 2011), windsurfing (Wheaton, 2000) and body-building (Monaghan, 2001). Each of these studies has helped shed light upon topics including: who participates in different sports and why; how sport is a site for the (re)production of identities (gender, sex, race, class); how sport involvement clashes with one's cultural worldview; how the construction of one's

social world and cultural networks are reinforced through participation (Atkinson & Young, 2008); and how the social-structural, behavioural or even cognitive/emotional components of life shape individual behaviours (Atkinson, 2016).

As Atkinson (2016) notes the majority of the aforementioned sport, exercise and physical cultural studies employ a realist approach. There are, however, other modes of ethnography at the disposal of the contemporary sport and exercise researcher. One such mode appropriate to this study is sensory ethnography. Described by Pink (2009a, p. 1) as "a way of thinking about and doing ethnography that takes as its starting point the multisensoriality of experience, perception, knowing and practice", sensory ethnography emphasises the need to account for how the multisensoriality of experience is integral to the "lives of people who participate in our research *and* to how we are researchers practice our craft" (Pink, 2009a, p. 1, empahsis in original). A position that is apposite with the phenomenologically sensitive approach adopted within this study. It should, however, be cautioned that although sensory ethnography is described by some authors as a new form of ethnography (Atkinson, 2016; Pink, 2009a), this does not mean that more traditional ethnography and ethnographers were not concerned with the senses. For example, the work by Stoller (1989), Feld (1982) and Classen, Howes, and Synnott (1994) are very much sensorially aware.

The need to develop reflexive skills to engage sensually via direct participation in the environment and the practice of others thus becomes paramount to the production of multisensorial and emplaced[7] ways of knowing. For Pink:

> …learning to sense and make meanings as others do thus involves us not simply observing what they do, but learning how to use all our senses and to participate in their worlds, on the terms of their embodied understandings (Pink, 2009a, p. 72).

One of the ways Pink outlines to do this is through 'sensory apprenticeship', where researchers actively engage in the activities and environments we wish to learn about. Although I was not fully engaged with the swimmers in this project in terms of actively

[7] Emplaced defined by Howes (2005, p. 7), as "the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment"

completing the various training sessions with them, nevertheless, I was still able to reflect on my own prior experiences of being a competitive swimmer to aid me in understanding the embodied, skilled, sensory process in which the swimmers engaged, therefore placing me in a strong position to comprehend their ways of knowing. I should, however, add a word of caution at this stage, that in order to do this, an active engagement with bracketing as demonstrated in the section 3.4 was maintained throughout the research project so as not to place my own presuppositions and assumptions onto the swimmers' experiences.

Ethnographic field work is also inherently embodied (Okely, 2007; Wacquant, 2005). As Sparkes (2009a) and Sparkes and Smith (2012) emphasise, this embodied immersion in a culture develops embodied ways of knowing through an engagement with all of the senses as fieldwork is conducted. It is clear from what has been presented thus far in this section that ethnography provides the qualitative researcher with one way of effectively engaging with the body, but further questions remain, for example, which data collection techniques are best suited to generate the necessary in-depth descriptions, and how much time should be spent in the field. It is to the former of these questions that I now turn.

3.5.2 Data Collection Techniques in Ethnography

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 4) refer to the qualitative researcher as "an interpretive *bricoleur* (who) produces a bricolage – that is, a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation". In a similar vein, Becker (1998, p. 2) notes that "the Qualitative researcher as bricoleur or maker of quilts uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand". Ethnographers, as qualitative researchers, are thus able to draw on multiple sources of data and call upon a range of data collection techniques. These tend to include, but are not limited to, participant observation, interviews, archive material, web-based material, diaries and visual methods (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Markula & Silk, 2011; Sparkes & Smith, 2014) in order to establish what is going on in a particular setting and capture what people are thinking, saying and experiencing. Given this abundance of choice and in keeping with the need to generate in-depth descriptions, decisions relating to choosing the methods most appropriate to explore the research problem become paramount (Creswell, 2013). This point is supported by Glesne and Peshkin, who note how:

> Different questions have different implications for data collection. In considering options, choose techniques that are likely to (1) elicit data needed to gain understanding of the phenomenon in question, (2) contribute different perspectives on the issue, and (3) make effective use of the time available for data collection (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 24).

I will detail in later sections (see sections 3.7 & 3.8) the specific choices made for this study and my rationale for their choice. With this in mind and with regard to collecting data about emotions, action, experiences and indeed the senses, it is not only vital that researchers choose the correct methods that will allow them to effectively answer the research questions, but that they also demonstrate that ethical considerations and procedures have been addressed, alongside topics of access and sampling. It is to these 'before the field' activities that I now turn.

3.6 Before the Field: Research Ethics, Sampling, Negotiating Access and Role

The following sections address the 'before the field' activities including research ethics, sampling, and how access and role where negotiated.

3.6.1 Research Ethics

Ethical conduct is an essential part of any research project (Palmer, 2016) and researchers must aim to ensure the rights, privacy, and welfare of the participants remain the focus of their study (Berg, 2004). Additionally, given the very nature of qualitative research Sparkes and Smith (2014, p. 79) emphasise that ethical issues are "pervasive and ongoing throughout the course of a study." I therefore choose to follow Hammersley and Atkinson in that:

> Ethnographers must weigh the importance and contribution of their research against the chances and scale of any harm that is likely to be caused (to the people involved, to others, or to future access), against the values of honesty and fairness, against any infringement of privacy involved, and against any likely consequences for themselves and other researchers. But this must be done on the basis of a realistic view of human relations, not an idealised one; and there will be conflicting indications, difficult judgements, and probably disagreements. Ethical issues are not matters on which simple and consensual decisions can always be made (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 225).

Addressing research ethics is therefore of paramount concern and obtaining ethical approval from the School of Sport and Exercise Science Ethics Committee (University of

Lincoln) was required before I could commence any data collection. Standard ethical procedures were followed in accordance with the University of Lincoln, and the School of Sport and Exercise ethics committee approved the project initially on the 20th November 2016. Updated ethical approval was secured on the 13th July 2017 due to a change in data collection procedures from short immersions in multiple sites, to a study design consisting of extended immersions in one site. It should, however, be noted at this stage that the fluidity of a qualitative study brings with it what Sparkes and Smith (2014, p. 81, empahsis in original) refer to a "*process-related* ethical issues" that need to be negotiated and re-negotiated throughout the entirety of the research process.

At the procedural level, consent to observe the swimmers was gained initially via the director of swimming and head coach. Additionally, the swimmers were asked as a group if anyone had any objections to being involved in observations prior to my first period of immersion. No one at this point offered any objection. Those swimmers who were then selected for interview, were issued with a participant information sheet and consent form (see appendices 2 and 3) outlining the nature, direction and purpose of the research project, as well as informing them that they could withdraw from the process at any time. In line with the emergent nature of qualitative research it is important to stress here that obtaining consent was not seen as a singular event accomplished at the start of the study. On the contrary, obtaining consent was an ongoing process that needed to be negotiated and re-established throughout the study, which Sparkes and Smith (2014, emphasis in original) term, *process consent*. Examples of this included updating the participants on the progress of the study and checking that they were still happy to participate, especially when returning for observation periods two and three and the closing group interviews. This ongoing consent permitted my continued observations, interviewing and writing in pursuit of what the swimmers often positively and inquisitively referred to as 'the book'.

Furthermore, it is important to note that those who gave observational or interview consent were only a proportion of the people encountered during the research process. Additional people, including other swimmers, coaches, support staff, academics and educators encountered during periods of observation or in workshops, may have directly or indirectly influenced the direction of the research at any given point. Moreover, when

swimmers described their experiences, they often referred to people outside of the research context to illustrate their points. Both of these issues came to light as 'by-products' of the 'normal', day-to-day interactions and thus entered into a research process that remained flexible in its rules. This also applied to issues of anonymity and confidentiality.

Key ethical concepts of anonymity and confidentiality are designed to protect participants from any harm (Kaiser, 2009), but can be complex processes. Like other ethical considerations, the problem of anonymity relies on a researcher's good judgement. As a result, all names of people or places used up to now or later in this project are pseudonyms. It should be noted, however, that although every attempt has been made to protect the participants' identities, due to the qualitative nature of this project in seeking rich descriptions, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed as identities may be disclosed unintentionally via deductive disclosure, based on responses, behaviours, and actions reported (Kaiser, 2009; Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

The researcher role also raises other ethical issues in ethnographic research. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) highlight how ethnographers are often assumed to subscribe to a higher ethical code than citizens, a position that inevitably proves difficult due to the shifting nature of the ethnographer's role as both participant and researcher. I therefore needed to acknowledge that I would be personally and professionally involved in the research setting while attempting to observe, interact and document the field. Such a position brought about its own ethical risks and required that I adhered to a full range of health and safety, and welfare requirements. In light of this, it became my objective to behave at all times with compassion and sensitivity, honesty and integrity, and display within my conduct and personal demeanour a level of respect, and appreciation towards the coaches, athletes, and the programme environment. Such a position aligns with the ethical principle of "McFee's friends" which according to Fleming (2013, p. 39) is an uncomplicated principle that works on the notion that researchers should treat their research participants with a concern for their well-being, in the spirit of friendship, where best judgements in relational to ethical aspects of the project were taken as and when the circumstances arose. To provide an example, I often found myself 'eavesdropping' on

conversations or difficult interactions between coaches and swimmers to which I was not a direct contributor. In this situation, although an unavoidable part of the ethnographic context, I had to make judgement calls on whether I should be privy to these discussions or not, often resulting in me removing myself from the situation, as one would do if friends or others were having a private conversation. Reflexivity and regular bracketing throughout the various stages of the research process (as detailed in section 3.4.1) thus became important components in assisting me to maintain a critical distance. Another key ethnographic consideration is the process of sampling the research site and social actors. It is this process that I now outline.

3.6.2 Sampling

Sampling is the process of making informed and strategic choices about the places, settings, people, times, and events best suited to answer the research questions (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Schwandt (1997) breaks the process down into two important stages. Firstly, in purposive or purposeful sampling, the researcher selects a field site relevant to studying the phenomena under investigation (the where), followed then by sampling within the field site (the who and when). This position is supported by Creswell and Poth who state that:

> …the concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research…[where] the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 158).

The question I therefore needed to answer when looking for a research site was: *Does it provide access to those with the experience that I am looking for?* With this in mind and aided by my knowledge of swimming in Great Britain, I was able to select ANP Swimming as a research site, given its ability to provide access to events, settings, actors and artefacts (Marshall & Rossman, 2015) directly related to the phenomenon under investigation.

With a research site selected, deciding upon who to investigate was the next step. For ethnographers, Fetterman (2010, p. 32) recommends the "big net approach" where at first the researcher mingles with a wide range of people, before making use of both opportunistic and/or criterion sampling to select participants based on the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Creswell and Poth (2018) also

note the appropriateness of criterion sampling for a phenomenological study, based on the essential need that all participants have experience of the phenomena under investigation. The initial criteria set was agreed through discussions with both the supervisory team and the coaches. To be included as a participant, a swimmer had to be an active member of one of the performance swimming groups and had to have competed at a minimum of British Championship level in the previous twelve months. These criteria were set as to be a member of one of these groups, and to have competed at this level requires a high level of commitment to and familiarity with the sport and thus helped ensure that participants were in a position to provide rich, in-depth descriptions of this particular aquatic lifeworld. In the end, this inclusion criteria covered all members of both performance groups so opportunistic sampling became more appropriate. I undertook this process by approaching various swimmers and asking them if they would be interested in being interviewed. Most of those asked were happy to do so, but some declined saying they didn't like interviews or didn't have the time. To cast Fetterman's (2010) 'net' however, I first had to gain access to my chosen research site and negotiate the role I would adopt.

3.6.3 Access

Gaining access required the help of a family member to broker a meeting with Clark the now former director of swimming at ANP Swimming. This initial discussion led to further correspondence via email with Clark and the other coaches, Nick and Tony, explaining why the site was chosen for the study, the aim of the study, what would be done at the site during the study, what they would get from me, and how the results would be reported. Subsequently, after all the coaches' questions were answered, I was offered the opportunity to speak directly with the swimmers to gauge their interest in being a part of the study. This initial meeting took place in May 2017 and both I and my description of the study requirements were well received. The next step was to arrange specific dates for my first immersion. It was decided that 2nd October until 3rd November 2017 was the most appropriate as this allowed for the new intake of swimmers to arrive and also for those who would be on a pre-season training camp during September to return. Subsequent immersion dates where agreed upon between immersions (see Table 3.2 for dates).

3.6.4 Researcher Role

The researcher's role can take on many forms along a continuum from complete observer (total observation, no involvement) to complete participant (total involvement with aim of becoming accepted in natural environment) (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Each of these roles has its own distinct advantages and disadvantages. As a complete participant, the researcher often attempts to pass as an ordinary member of the group being studied (Karp, 1980; Pettinger, 2005), which according to Jules-Rosette (1978a, 1978b) and Ferrell and Hamm (1998) is the ideal position to aim for as it offers the most accurate insider perspective. It can, however, be argued that to adopt the role of complete participant is unsustainable as to do so a researcher would have to place all scholarly activity on hold, because as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 83) note complete participation not only restricts the methods or tools available to a researcher (for example, note taking and probing of informants) but "places great strain on the fieldworkers' dramaturgical capacities". At the other end of the continuum, as a complete observer, a position that is also arguably unattainable, as to be present in a research setting is to already be intersubjectively involved, the researcher may encounter paradoxically similar predicaments. On one hand, they are able to observe with only minimal influence upon the natural behaviours of the participants, but on the other, they are severely limited in what can and cannot be observed, and questioning participants could be impossible (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Although both these roles have their advantages and disadvantages, Hammersley and Atkinson argue that:

> …adopting either of these roles alone would usually make it very difficult to generate and test accounts in a rigorous manner, though both may be useful strategies to adopt during particular phases of fieldwork, and in some situations may be the only options possible (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 85).

As a result, most fieldwork is usually situated somewhere between these two poles, where the researcher shifts between roles allowing access to different kinds of data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, to maintain a level of flexibility that allowed me to move along this continuum when necessary, I adopted the role of a volunteer assistant (coach), providing support to the coaches and swimmers where necessary, giving me the option to observe from differing degrees of proximity. This is a position I was very familiar with,

having been both a swimmer and also a swimming coach, making me what some would consider to be a 'cultured insider' (Evers, 2006; Wheaton, 2002). Although this level of active involvement offered me a unique position from which to gain in depth insights, as Allen-Collinson (2013) notes:

> …it is debatable whether anyone can ever be deemed a complete member of any culture, subculture or social group…rather, it might be more accurate to posit that there are degrees of insiderness and outsiderness, which change over time, place and social context (Allen-Collinson, 2013, p. 287).

Keeping this in mind, I was aware that although my role had been defined as a volunteer assistant, my insider/outsider status was very much in flux throughout the project with each position bringing its own specific possibilities, challenges and limitations (Thorpe & Olive, 2016).

My position as a 'cultured insider' on the one hand helped me to gain access to the research site, provided me with a potential 'head start' in recognising what the significant issues, concepts and themes of the investigation could be, and afforded me the opportunity during initial observations to walk around the pool engaging with the participants in informal conversations to build rapport and quell any authority myth which might have occurred. As I began to know the swimmers and coaches better, I developed a greater level of emotional connectedness to the cultural practices of the programme. It was Matthew and Wade who delivered the news that I was being accepted into the programme when they asked if I would be attending a competition with them during immersion one. When I said I wouldn't be, they asked "why not?", as I was now a "member of the team". The instant they said this I knew their comment had left a mark on me in terms of changing the perception I had of my position within the research setting from an outsider to an insider. These significant moments happen rarely within fieldwork and when they do, they leave the impression of constituting an important step in the research project.

On the other hand, my experience did cause issues with maintaining a critical distance from which to work effectively and from which to represent the participants' worldviews (see also Thorpe & Olive, 2016). My dilemma centred on trying to avoid becoming identified with just one side of the coach-athlete divide. I wanted to be perceived as neutral rather

than having to define precisely whose 'side' I was on. I wished to maintain this neutrality so that the swimmers would not see me as 'a coach' and therefore remain willing to talk openly around me. The following reflective note does, however, highlight my frustrations at trying to maintain this neutrality as time went along, where my experience, and skills as a coach were increasingly called upon to provide advice on planning, session design, technique and disciplinary matters:

> To say I'm getting a little frustrated is an understatement. I know Tony has been away quite a bit lately and it's great that they [the coaches] trust me to fill in, but it's also frustrating. I feel as though I have definitely been more of a coaching insider as opposed to researcher over the last few days or week. I am really finding maintain a position challenging…I never thought that it would be this difficult and I'm finding it harder and harder to balance being coach, researcher, confidant etc. I'm not their coach, but I am part of the coaching group while I'm here. I'm also a researcher, however, and having to strike that balance is proving more and more challenging the longer I am here. It's even more challenging when I always end up with the same group. I understand that I can only observe what is in front of me but it's also frustrating as I feel I am missing out on other things going on in the pool. Additionally, as a result of feeling frustrated, I'm then not really focused on what I am doing and what's directly in front of me (Fieldnote, 8th February 2018 PM).

This was not an isolated incident and occurred more frequently as time in the field increased. In these situations, the researcher/voluntary assistant (coach) role balance was constantly in flux. At one point, this role tension drew comment from one former coach at ANP Swimming, who jokingly expressed concern at whether I was still able to undertake my academic research as well as the coaching work. To manage these challenges, I had to continuously engage with reflexive work both with my supervisory team, and individually through self-reflections, in an attempt to sustain bracketing, and to regain what Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p. 60) refer to as the "space between", allowing me to continue to question the events and practices observed. These steps, as detailed earlier, thus became vital throughout my data collection and analysis.

As the previous sections portray, adopting an appropriate role at the right time is essential for accessing and making sense of the lifeworld under investigation. Participant observation, with its attendant field notes, is thus a useful starting point for data generation in a study of this nature, and it is to these practices that I now turn.

3.7 In the Field: Observations

Observations involve the researcher witnessing first-hand the actions behaviours and interactions of individuals within the field under investigation. But what and how one observes, as well as how these observations are recorded are important considerations.

3.7.1 What to Observe

Researchers have offered various strategies to help structure observational practices most of which advocate beginning with a broad viewpoint before progressively narrowing in on the deeper elements of the setting (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). For example, Wolcott (1981, p. 255) identifies four strategies relating to ”what to look for” which are: observe and record everything; observe and look for nothing in particular; look for paradoxes; and look for the key problem(s). Adler and Adler (1994, p. 381) advise a “funnel” approach that progressively narrows and directs attention onto the key elements of a research setting. Similarly, Markula and Silk (2011, p. 165) identify three stages for observations: descriptive observation, where the researcher aims to record everything they can; focused observation, which refers to more specific observation that concentrates on more defined activity or location in the field; and selective observation, that refers to further specified observation of a more specific aspect of an activity or location. Although Markula and Silk (2011) present these as separate stages, they also emphasis that not all ethnographers will use each one and often all three occur at the same time. This position is supported by Thorpe and Olive (2016, p. 130) who refer to “zooming in and out depending on the requirements of the situation”.

In keeping with the phenomenologically-inspired approach of this study, maintaining an open-ended approach was important because it allowed both my role and the style of observation utilised to be flexible. The observations took place during and around the training sessions that coincided with the three periods of immersion in the field. During each of these three immersions, I attended pool sessions that where typically scheduled between 5:30-8:00am and 5:30-8:00pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 12:00-2:00pm on a Wednesday, and 5:15 to 6:45am on a Saturday (these were subject to change, and often were changed based on coach preference or other events). I also attend land-based training sessions when able to. On average, I participated in and observed an average of 25

hours of training each week. In addition to this and equally important was the time spent before and after each session with the swimmers and coaches because this was where rapport was built, and informal conversation could take place. Such an approach enabled me to witness aspects of the swimmers' experiences which they may not have been able to articulate during interviews, such as their body language, social interactions, physical expressions and nuanced behaviours. These observations, interactions and discussions were recorded in the form of typed fieldnotes on my iPhone utilising the OneNote application and subsequently written up in more detail after each session (see appendices 3 and 4 for examples of each).

3.7.2 Recording Observations: Fieldnotes

Although seen by some as an arduous task, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 142) argue that without adequate note-taking an ethnography is "like using an expensive camera with poor quality film" resulting in foggy pictures. As a result, the *what, how* and *when* of taking fieldnotes becomes important. This process is different in each ethnography and for each ethnographer, but must be as detailed a possible to provide enough empirical material for analysis, including both observational (descriptions, connections to previous literature) and personal notes (feelings, struggles, doubts, reflections) (Markula & Silk, 2011).

The process of when to make fieldnotes is also something with which researchers must contend, especially if they actively participated in the activity under investigation (Thorpe & Olive, 2016). In this project, taking notes during training sessions was very much situation dependent. Sometimes I could type rough notes onto my iPhone while swimmers completed the various repetitions of a set. At other times this was not possible as repetitions were shorter or more intense, or the swimmer's technique demanded my full attention, or when I was left in charge of sessions while coaches where away. No matter which situation presented itself, I always had my iPhone available, so I could type notes at the first possible opportunity, for example, during recovery periods within the session, after the session while still on poolside as the swimmers completed their post-pool stretching routines, or as I returned to my accommodation. As mentioned above, the swimmers trained both early mornings and evenings, allowing me the opportunity to write more detailed notes, carry out preliminary analysis, and record my reflections after one

session and before the next; a process that prevented my observations from fading from memory (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

In keeping with the phenomenological nature of this project, Ravn (2016b) outlines a list of questions/ideas that helped guide my observations in terms of what to look for. These included:

1. How is the practice organised by the practitioners? Describe the different kinds of practices within the practice. Aim at being specifically aware of the differences, similarities and connections between these kinds of practices within the practice when it comes to the movement that can be seen and felt.
2. How do the practitioners use their attention and (maybe) change their awareness in the different kinds of practice within the practice? Which kinds of sensations seem to be of importance or of special interest to them?
3. Which kinds of sayings, words and concepts are used by the practitioners? How and when do they communicate, and how is the communication timed in relation to or as part of movements and interactions?
4. How can the sensory involvement related to the practice be described? Prepare certain tasks for yourself to enable you to strategically use a shift in your own perceptual mode of awareness when observing. For example, use 10 minutes three times during the training session to specifically note the sounds of practice, the smells, the temperature and so on (Ravn, 2016b, p. 209).

I therefore made notes of what was going on, what the swimmers did, how they did it, and how it seemed to affect them. Notes were taken not only about specific incidents or moments, but also in reference to the normal or routine things, in order to give as full a picture of the swimming lifeworld as possible. Aspects such as the swimmers' demeanour, who arrived first or last to training, which lanes swimmers went in, with whom, who led or brought up the rear of each lane, and the atmosphere before and after each session were all recorded. Even things like the temperature of the water and air, and smell of the chlorine were noted. By doing so, I was able to build up a basic description of each training session, that utilised not only sight but a gamut of other senses, in order to engage with the wider sensorium and shared experiences (Pink, 2009a). As I became more experienced with this process and guided by preliminary analysis from each immersion, the notes became more specific.

To avoid my observations becoming purely descriptive, they were written up in the form of a first-person narrative, allowing for the inclusion of my own reflections from the field in a manner akin to, but not as rigorous as, an autoethnography where a researcher would explicitly situate and write her/himself into the account as a key player. In doing so, I was able to acknowledge my active immersion within the research environment and provided myself with a space to reflect upon the more nuanced individual behaviours I observed (Ellis, 2004).

In closing this section, I would highlight that although observations allowed me to get close to the athletes, build rapport, and question them on some elements of their lifeworld, the environment of the swimming pool and a swimming training session did still pose some challenges to the research process. For example, the building acoustics, along with the playing of loud music especially during key sessions, made it challenging to hear certain conversations and utterances. Additionally, the swimmers generally spent 75-80% of their time with their face in the water completing metre after metre, and when they did stop, they were normally taking instructions from coaches and/or trying to recover and refuel. This made direct conversation with them during these times, and at other key moments, more challenging. As a result, the need to supplement the periods of observation with semi-structured interviews was acknowledged, to develop a fuller picture of the swimming lifeworld and to assemble the swimmers' own direct descriptions of their experiences too.

3.8 In the Field: Interviews

Interviews in qualitative research provide a key avenue for exploring the ways participants feel, experience and understand their everyday world or lifeworld (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This potential has resulted in interviewing becoming the most widely used qualitative data collection method in sport and exercise research (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Choosing to do interviews, however, according to Potter and Hepburn (2005, p. 283) "is often taken-for-granted" with "very little explicit justification" for their use, or their appropriateness for the study. Interviewing should therefore not be considered the default choice (Markula & Silk, 2011), nor should they be considered easy (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). The following sections thus outline why interviews were chosen, what an interview is, and how interviews were actually implemented.

3.8.1 Why Choose Interviews?

Interviews are particularly valuable for gathering knowledge about experience and meaning, and can offer an effective way for people not only to give detailed descriptions of their experiences but also their perspectives and interpretations of such experiences (Markula & Silk, 2011). Interviews, with the exception of rigid, structured interviews, are also generally quite flexible, further enhancing the generation of knowledge, by allowing the researcher to go off-script, utilising unplanned questions to explore anywhere that curiosity is stirred. Furthermore, an interview can: generate insight into the context in which people live; provide an environment from which to discuss sensitive issues; and provide insight into the temporal dimensions of human life, most notably when the interview is a narrative occasion (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). However, although interviews are useful in generating this type of knowledge, their use should be tempered by the consideration that interviews are not a transparent window into unrestricted or unmediated experiences (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003; Randall & Phoenix, 2009). Experience and meaning are shaped by our sociocultural landscape and framework, and people therefore draw on socioculturally available discourses in order to make sense of conversations. Researchers thus need to be aware that an interview can capture something of the shared understandings of a social world but does not give access to pristine private experiences (Smith & Sparkes, 2016).

3.8.2 What is an interview?

A face-to-face interview has been defined as a social activity involving two or more people who are actively engaged in embodied talk, constructing knowledge about themselves and the social world as they interact over time, in a place, and through a range of senses (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Most interviews focus on the individual and can afford a sensitive and powerful method for capturing experiences, and lived meanings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Markula & Silk, 2011), both of which are important considerations in a phenomenologically-inspired approach as utilised in this study. Thus, the purpose of an interview is to create a conversation where participant(s) “tell stories, accounts, reports and/or descriptions about their perspectives, insights, experiences, feelings, emotions and/or behaviours in relation to the research questions” (Smith & Sparkes, 2016, p. 103).

My own approach to interviews was influenced by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), who use the metaphors of the 'miner' and the 'traveller' to contrast two different types of interviewer, illustrating the different epistemological conceptions of interviewing as a process of knowledge collection or a process of knowledge construction. The 'miner' metaphor is more in line with positivistic epistemologies, viewing knowledge as an uncontaminated, buried, precious metal (objective data) waiting to be unearthed or extracted from participants. Alternatively, the 'traveller' metaphor aligns itself with interpretive epistemologies, viewing knowledge as co-constructed between interviewee and interviewer.

For me, having shared the participants' lifeworld for several weeks before conducting interviews, and in keeping with the ethos of this project, adopting the traveller's perspective from which to conduct my interviews made sense. My interviews, therefore, as Smith and Sparkes (2016, p. 103, emphasis in original) note were "*always* and *inescapably* shaped by numerous social factors", including the motivations, memories, emotions, age, gender, class and degree of ability of myself as the interviewer and each individual interviewee, as well as the nonverbal interactions that occurred between us (Randall & Phoenix, 2009).

The next step was to select a style of interview that afforded me the opportunity to understand the embodied experiences of the swimmers and remain in tune with the phenomenological elements of this project. According to Smith and Sparkes (2016) there are four generic forms of interviewing, that differ in their structure and number of participants. At one end of this continuum is the highly standardised individual structured interview, where a researcher, using an interview schedule, asks a set of closed questions in the same order. This approach is very rarely used within qualitative research. The second approach is the individual semi-structured approach, where the researcher uses a pre-planned interview guide, employing relatively focused but open-ended questions. Thirdly, at the other end of the continuum is the individual unstructured interview, in which the researcher uses a few open-ended questions to facilitate the conversation. This form of interview gives the participant a greater degree of control over what is said and how. Brinkmann (2013, p. 18) notes that the distinction between un- and semi-structured

interviews “should be thought of as a continuum ranging from relatively structured to relatively unstructured formats” as interviews ebb and flow between topics and themes.

The fourth format is the focus group. This approach is often semi-structured but differs from the individual format as it employs multiple participants at the same time, with a view to stimulate talk through interaction. The researcher thus takes on the role of facilitator or moderator, creating an atmosphere in which interaction is encouraged, resulting in multiple and often conflicting viewpoints emerging (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). A summary of these styles can be seen in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 The characteristics of different interviews (Markula & Silk, 2011, pp. 100-101)

Type	Structured	Semi-Structured	Un-structured
Setting	Formal	(In)-Formal	In-formal
Interaction	Face-to-face, telephone, electronic (e.g. email)	Face-to-Face, Telephone, Electronic (e.g. Skype)	Face-to-Face
Participants	Individual or Group	Individual or Group	Individual or Group
Interviewer	Objective, controlling leader	Subjective leader (participant)	Subjective participant
Types of Questions	Closed	Open-ended	Open-ended conversational
Type of Information	To identify adequate indicators for chosen variables	In-depth	In-depth

For the purpose of this study Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) semi-structured lifeworld interview, defined as an interview where the purpose is to obtain descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee were employed initially in immersion one. This mode of interviewing was selected as it is in keeping with the phenomenologically-sensitive ethnographic approach of this study, because as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 27) note “a semi-structured life world interview attempts to understand themes of the lived everyday world from the subject’s own perspectives.” To do so it seeks to unearth detailed in-depth descriptions of the interviewee’s lived world. As a process, it resembles an everyday conversation but is semi-structured, conducted with the aid of an interview guide

that focuses on relevant topics or themes as defined by the overall research aim. This approach thus provided a balance between rigid, structured interview techniques and more spontaneous conversations, allowing the participants to recount their lived experience in their own language and terminology which is an important consideration in a phenomenologically-inspired approach (Dale, 1996; O'Halloran, Littlewood, Richardson, Tod, & Nesti, 2018).

As a further point, there are some sports psychologists (e.g. Dale, 1996; Nesti, 2004) who may argue that a more unstructured phenomenological interview that utilises the use of one question and a more naturalistic conversation, would have been better suited to this research project. I decided against this unstructured approach for a number of practical reasons, such as the participants' ability to eloquently orate their descriptions within the interview settling and without prompts. With many of the participants aged between 18 and 22, it was felt that the demanding nature of an unstructured phenomenological interview, as well as other operational considerations such as the time required for an engaging encounter to take place, outweighed the more pragmatic approach of a semi-structured lifeworld interview. This latter approach still allowed the interview to remain open-ended and although initially researcher-led, participants were allowed to digress from initial questions and follow their own lines of thought thus foregrounding their voices. The following sections outline the process of interviewing employed and the subsequent challenges that arose.

3.8.3 The Interview Process

As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) note, interviewing is a craft, and like any craft, is learnt and refined by doing. My interview 'travels' were therefore more akin to journeys towards a creative mutual understanding as opposed to conquests of data accomplishment. To achieve this creative mutual understanding Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), along with several other authors including: Dale (1996, 2000); Giorgi (2009); Moustakas (1994); (Ravn, 2016b); Smith and Sparkes (2016); and Sparkes and Smith (2014) outline several 'tips' that can help facilitate an effective interview. These 'tips' helped to structure and facilitate the interview and are highlighted in the following sections relating to the period before, during and after the interview.

3.8.3.1 Prior to the Interview

Before undertaking an interview one of the key components is the development of the interview guide or script. Smith and Sparkes (2016, pp. 110-111) outline eleven issues worthy of consideration including using the literature to draft a list of open-ended questions, the refinement of this list, and the use of a 'grand-tour' opening question to begin the interview (e.g. can you tell me about your life as a swimmer) and a 'closing tour' at the end that invites participants to fill in gaps (e.g. is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't explored). This process was undertaken with input from my supervisory team to help critique and refine the interview guide.

With regards to the main body of questions, commensurate with a phenomenologically-sensitive approach, the interview had to be primarily descriptive, focusing more on the 'how' and the 'what' as opposed to the 'why' (Giorgi, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Questions were often supplemented with examples drawn from the periods of observation, utilising the same words, metaphors and sayings used during the practice. As Ravn (2016b) argues, this makes the interview more personal as it gives each participant the opportunity to link descriptions to actual lived experience, which in turn encourages participants to share their lived experience in greater detail, generating still richer and possibly more varied descriptions (Ravn & Hansen, 2013).

With a guide formulated and in keeping with Moustakas' (1994) advice, prior to starting the interviews, I asked the coaches if I could have five minutes during their weekly briefing with the swimmers to once again outline the nature of the project and ask for interviewees. During this briefing, I presented the group with a research summary that outlined the potential structure of the interview to help prepare them for the subject matter. This allowed each participant to dwell and ponder on these points before being interviewed. Englander (2012) notes how this can aid in gaining richer descriptions within the interview without having to ask too many questions. Additionally, participants were encouraged to view this research as a collaboration of efforts (Moustakas, 1994) in seeking knowledge and insight into the embodied experiences of competitive swimming.

The next step was arranging a suitable time and place where each participant could feel comfortable, relaxed, and unselfconscious (Moustakas, 1994); a place that typically was of their choosing and was usually a meeting room or an office at the swimming pool where they trained. Prior to each interview the recording equipment was checked and any previous transcripts read and analysed to formulate new topics or questions (Smith & Sparkes, 2016).

3.8.3.2 During the Interview

Dale (1996, 2000) and Smith and Sparkes (2016) outline that one of the most critical steps in any interview is to build rapport with the participant. Having spent time with the swimmers at the field site, prior to interview, initial rapport had begun to be established. However, efforts were still made to ensure that each participant was comfortable and ready to proceed. Once settled, the participant was again briefed of the purpose of the research, the structure of the interview, and encouraged to give full, detailed, and comprehensive descriptions of the experiences being reflected upon. Additionally, each participant was asked if they had any questions before the interview began (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview then began with the grand tour question, asking each participant to describe their personal swimming journey, with subsequent general questions relating to, for example, their current training schedule and practices, and their embodied and sensory experiences of swimming.

Smith and Sparkes (2016) highlight the need to be an active listener by being attentive, curious and responsive to the participant. This is a position supported by Ravn (2016b), who argues that part of being an active listener is the ability to open yourself to the space of possibilities by being aware that the experiences of the participants might be very different to what was observed or what the researcher had previously experienced. As a result, I set a slow and relaxed pace, reminding each participant that they could take as much time as he or she wished to contemplate each question and to give their answers. Pauses, silences and moments of reflection thus became a normal part of the process, something that is common place in phenomenological interviewing (Moustakas, 1994). As the conversion developed, additional “curiosity-driven questions/explorations” including description (what was it like being there?), elaboration (tell me more about that?) and

clarification (I'm not sure I understand what you mean by that. Can you help me understand what you mean?) were used to generate deeper understanding (Smith & Sparkes, 2016, p. 112).

As each interview drew to a close, the participant was asked if they had anything else they felt was pertinent to report but had not yet been discussed. With the interview concluded, each participant was thanked for their time and asked for their comments on how they felt the interview went. They were also each given my email address in case they wished to contact me in relation to the project or any follow-up questions.

3.8.3.3 After the Interview

Once each participant had left, and following Smith and Sparkes (2016) recommendation, I began to make reflexive notes recalling as much information about the interview as possible in answer to questions such as: What kind of relationship did I feel I developed with the participant? How did I feel and respond to their stories? How did they react to and answer the questions? Where they relaxed or nervous? Do any of the questions need changing and what things could I do better as the interviewer? These notes thus became not only a reflexive record of each interview but could also be harnessed to aid with analysis and document my development as an interviewer and the interview process as a whole.

The next step in the interview process was to begin transcription. Of the initial 19 interviews conducted during immersion one, I transcribed 11 personally with the remaining eight being outsourced to a transcription service. On reflection, however, and for future projects, although time-consuming, transcribing each interview personally would be my preferred choice. This allows an initial immersion in the data that is missed when interviews are transcribed by others. Additionally, upon checking the outsourced transcriptions, they were found to contain inaccuracies, often missing key terms and context, with one transcription needing to be completely redone due to the degree of error in it.

3.8.4 Interview Schedule

The initial 19 interviews were conducted during the first field immersion. A follow-up interview with each interviewee was conducted during immersion two, at which point I

was able to ask additional questions, arising from the fieldwork observations, or to gain further clarification on comments from the initial interview. For example, having noted that music was played during the training sessions, I asked the swimmers if this influenced them in anyway, and whether they sang along to the music – out loud or in their heads.

The final step in the interviewing process occurred during immersion three. After some initial data analysis was undertaken between immersions and potential themes having begun to be generated, I was able to return to the participants to seek their thoughts and to ask further questions, this time in groups. This process aligns with what Tracy (2010, p. 844) refers to as "member reflections" that "allow for sharing and dialoguing with participants about the study's findings, and providing opportunities for questions, critique, feedback, affirmation and even collaboration". This is not, it should be emphasized, a form of 'member checking' or 'validation', seeking to ensure that the researcher 'got it right' but rather to provide an opportunity to "yield new data which throws fresh light on the investigation and which provides a spur for deeper and richer analyses" (Bloor, 2001, p. 235). As a result, this process of member reflection provided an opportunity for further "*collaboration* and reflexive *elaboration*" on the research findings (Tracy, 2010, p. 844, emphasis in orignal). I engaged with this by conducting three group discussions with the swimmers in which I presented to them some of the ideas and concepts initially generated from the data, as well as asking further questions to help clarify some possible contradictions between their interview data and my observations. To continue with the example noted above relating to sound, I sought further information on the role sound played within the training environment, asking the groups of swimmers about the role of the music played during sessions, self-talk, or their use of an audible pacing device that they refer to as 'a beeper'. As with the initial interviews, these group interviews were semi-structured, took place at the swimmers' training venue, were reflected upon afterwards and subsequently transcribed personally, adding a further dimension to the data collection and analysis process.

As a way of closing this section on the methods of data collection employed, I feel it is important to highlight some of the unforeseen challenges and demands that arose during the interview process.

3.8.5 Challenges and Demands

As mentioned in section 3.8.3.2, one of the key elements to an interview is being an active listener, which involves not only listening/hearing but also seeing the other person so that you can 'tune-in' to their body language and gestures. This also meant being aware of the non-verbal messages that I was projecting as an interviewer, that may inadvertently have created barriers of disclosure. Therefore, it was important that I married the open nature of the interview with an open-mindedness, a relaxed stance (unfolded arms, warm eye-contact), and timely, encouraging gestures (nodding, smiling, laughing). Because of this, I tried to prepare myself, both mentally and emotionally, as much as possible before each interview as an interactional occasion.

Nonetheless, one can never guarantee what might arise in an interview due to the unpredictability of social situations. For example, during the interview with Jean where she openly disclosed some very personal stories regarding some sensitive issues, I was unprepared for this and it took me somewhat off guard, resulting in me expressing shock and surprise. At the close of this interview I thanked Jean for her openness, and she was quick to say, "don't worry it was fine, we like you and we enjoy having you around" (fieldnote, 2nd November 2017) showing the level of comfort and rapport that had been established, and also alleviating my concerns regarding my responses to her answers.

A further concern related to the participants being able to eloquently orate their own embodied and sensory experiences. They often struggled to find the right words to describe what they had experienced and from time to time even used the phrase "but you know what that's like" alluding to the fact that I myself had been a competitive swimmer so must have some understanding of what they are trying to describe. In such situations, I firstly asked the swimmers to imagine that I was complete swimming neophyte, and to describe their experiences as clearly as they could by using metaphors or examples from other areas of their lives to compare and contrast these experiences with. Further to this I then asked the swimmers to describe a different experience, or a different element of an experience. For example, with some of the swimmers I asked them to talk me through the various elements of their race as a way of getting them to break an experience into smaller more manageable chunks. Additionally and following Ravn's (2016b) advice, noted earlier in

section 3.8.3.1, I drew upon examples from my observations that I had experienced alongside the swimmers, and asked them to talk about those. In this situation I could help by recalling specific moments such as asking them to describe the feelings experienced prior to, during, or after a specific type of training session.

The previous sections have highlighted the 'before and during' the field activities related to this project. To complete the picture of fieldwork that I have portrayed, there is one final element that needs addressing: leaving the field.

3.9 Leaving the Field

The process of leaving the field in ethnographic research is often not given the attention it deserves within research methods or ethnographic textbooks. When it is addressed, the process is usually framed around methodological roboticism and principles such as data saturation, deadlines, or funding restrictions (Smith & Atkinson, 2017). As participants in a research setting, however, ethnographers engage to a greater or lesser degree in physical, social and psychological involvement and often develop close bonds and friendships with those they are researching, which makes leaving the field a more complex process than simply packing away our notepads and voice recorders. This was very much the case for me. As I came to know the swimmers and coaches better through each subsequent immersion, I developed a greater level of emotional connectedness to them and the cultural practices of the ANP Swimming programme. Through their acceptance of me, I became part of their swimming experience, playing a small role in their development by lending an ear to listen to their thoughts and feelings, or offering a word or two of advice and encouragement where needed. In other words, the swimmers' and my experiences became intersubjectively and intercorporeally entangled or enmeshed (Ingold, 2007, 2008) co-producing the research through an engagement with the field. Each time I returned between immersions to visit, with a view of maintaining relationships and dialogue, the swimmers asked if I was back for another few weeks, only for us all to be disappointed when I said it was just a 'flying visit' for that one session.

Additionally, with my previous experience of swimming coaching and my continued interest in the sport and the discipline of coaching more generally, this ethnography

became more than just a study of the swimmers to me. It became a learning experience, where I developed additional skills in terms of working with senior performance swimmers, coaches, and staff in an environment with which I was unfamiliar. These moments therefore affected me not just as a researcher but also as a person and a swimming coach. Breaking these physical and emotional attachments, and withdrawing from the field to the grey, uninspiring, windowless, dungeon of an office that I occupied, was therefore something that I found extremely challenging and left me feeling a little lost each time it occurred. I had developed a sense of 'embodied empathy' (Pink, 2011) with the other people involved and my 'dis-emplacement' from the field and 'corporeal re-habituation' (Smith & Atkinson, 2017, p. 637) to the office was not entirely a 'clean break'. I found myself following (and still following to this day) the exploits of the programme and the swimmers via text messages or emails with the coaches, the team's twitter page, and live streams and result sheets from events where the swimmers had been competing. It should, however, be cautioned that over empathizing with participants can lead to other dangers, especially if researchers seek to or begin to 'merge' with participants. Avoiding such mergers is important in maintaining a level of 'difference' from, and therefore respecting others' experiences and perspectives (Owton & Allen-Collinson, 2014). This process of gradual detachment became easier as my day-to-day involvement with the programme ceased and I found myself in a more distanced position from where I could begin to select which aspects of the swimmers' experiences were most salient to answer my research questions. By the end of my third immersion, my time experiencing what the swimmers, coaches and staff experienced was completed, seeing me depart from my role within the physical culture of ANP Swimming, to a role with the responsibility of representing the lived experiences of those so heavily involved in that particular physical culture.

Detachment from the field is therefore never a clean, precise, or simple methodological process but involves the disentanglement of oneself from place and people (Smith & Atkinson, 2017); a process that is never fully completed as we always carry a part of the places, and people we encounter with us in memories and our research. My transition out of the field was thus characterised by three interrelating elements. Firstly, it placed me back into a position of an outsider to ANP Swimming, although not the same outsider as when I started this project, due to the experiences, knowledge and connections I had

amassed. Upon further reflection, it also became apparent to me that this transition period was marked by more than just my leaving of ANP Swimming. I have been involved in swimming from a very young age, and this leaving of ANP Swimming felt like I was leaving a part of my life behind, placing me into a liminal state between my former swimming self and a future academic self. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that associated with this transition, I was faced with an emotional rollercoaster that went from the energy and excitement of following the twists and turns of a performance sport environment, to working my way around the feelings of loss and withdrawal, where I can quite honestly say I was difficult to be around for a few days. And finally, having eventually regained some perspective about my transition from field-worker to desk-worker, I was able to begin the processes required in the analysis and writing of this text. This methodological step was initially aided by a five-month relocation to Copenhagen as part of my dual degree, providing a fresh outlook and approach as well undertaking a number of visits back to ANP Swimming in order to maintain a connection to the field and its actors. This process was undertaken so that my writing did not become disembodied from the place and people whose stories I was attempting to portray. It is to these analytical and representational processes that I now turn.

3.10 Data Analysis

As several authors have argued that all research involves both inductive and deductive processes to some extent (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001; Côté, Salmela, Abderrahim, & Russell, 1993), it is therefore impossible for me to claim that only one approach was used within this study. As such, the deductive elements of my study can be identified as stemming from the general sociological-phenomenological framework of the study, my previous knowledge of competitive swimming, and my observations as these provided me with some form of thematic guidance as to what questions to ask in interviews and aspects to look for during observations. The research questions themselves also provided a deductive element as they identify certain areas the researcher is attempting to establish within the data. However, the data analysis did include an inductive emphasis as well, by seeking to reflect upon and remain true to the participants' experiences and the meanings of their lifeworld as conveyed to me, and theorising from the data gathered. The following sections outline how this approach was adopted.

3.10.1 Data Immersion

In keeping with Giorgi's (1997) phenomenological method, the first stage of the analysis process began with my immersion in the data. I began by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and observation notes to gain a global sense of the data. At this stage there was no attempt to thematise any aspect of the descriptions collected, but gaining a global sense of the data is an important step as it helps to influence how the parts are constituted (Giorgi, 1997). Having read the interview transcripts and observation notes a number of times the next step was to begin to break the data down to identify themes and sub-themes. It is at this point that I deviate from Giorgi's prescribed method of transfer tables and meaning units, instead utilising an approach to qualitative thematic analysis (TA) as described by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) which attended to the generation of themes from the data and is more in keeping with the underpinning sociological elements of the project. TA was selected due to its ability to explore the meanings and significances of the participants' experiences, seeking to gain insight into their lived experiences and the competitive swimming lifeworld. It is Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2013) TA approach and how I engaged with it that the remainder of this section details.

3.10.2 Thematic Analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2013) define TA[8], as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes), within the dataset; an approach they describe as 'flexible' as it is not tied to a particular theoretical framework and therefore remains relatively detached from specific ontological and epistemological anchors. As a result of this flexibility Braun and Clarke's TA approach suits a range of qualitative research questions or investigations, including analyses of people's experiences in relation to a specific phenomenon (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016). Braun and Clarke (2013) and Braun et al. (2016) describe the process of TA by utilising a six-phase model (see Table 3.4). They are, however, quick to acknowledge that in describing TA in this way they portray TA as a linear, un-messy process which couldn't be further from the truth. Rather, TA is more "an adventure than a recipe" (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 4) where one moves back and forth as required between the data

[8] Braun and Clarke (2019, p. 4) have subsequently renamed their approach 'reflexive thematic analysis' to distinguish it from other forms of TA, and to better convey the need for researchers using their approach to engage with "reflexivity, theoretical knowingness and transparency".

and the analysis, refining and redeveloping the generated themes and concepts. Such an analysis therefore involves both inductive and deductive steps in order to construct knowledge from the data.

Table 3.4 Phases of Thematic Analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2013)

Phase	Description of the Process
Familiarising yourself with the data	Transcription of data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas or thoughts
Generating initial codes	Identifying and labelling interesting features in the data
Searching for themes	Gathering codes into potential 'higher-level' themes
Reviewing themes	Checking whether themes fit with the data and address research question
Defining and naming themes	Generating clear definitions and names for each theme that capture succinctly the "essence" of each theme
Producing the report	Selection of illustrative and analytic extracts that relate back to the research question and literature. Production of scholarly report

3.10.3 The Process of Thematic Analysis

In completing the data analysis, I followed the phases of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013) in Table 3.4. The process that I followed in reference to each of these phases was as follows.

Phase 1: Familiarising myself with the data: This was done through the process of listening to each audio file, transcribing the interviews, and reading each of the transcriptions and observational notes on a number of occasions to gain a global sense of the data, as outlined in section 3.10.1. After several readings I began to make preliminary notes in reference to recurring topics of conversation from the interviews, or actions recorded in the observational notes. It should, however, be stressed that due to the nature of the data collection process involved i.e. three distinct phases that included observational notes and interview data from each phase, I was also able to use each phase to inform the next. As these readings and re-readings continued throughout each phase of the data collection, I was able to begin the process of allocating codes to the data.

Phase 2 Generating initial codes. Having familiarised myself with the data, I was already beginning to understand the common elements that were present within. As a result, although I used an open form of coding where I didn't have any predetermined codes that I was matching the data to, I was aware of what the data was already saying. Coding was initially undertaken through a paper and pen exercise where I read each transcript and marked every significantly identifiable statement or comment with a code. For example, any content/statements relating to the various senses were coded under a code that represented that sense, i.e. touch, sound, etcetera. If a statement fitted into more than one code, it was coded to both. Once this pen and paper exercise was completed, I then uploaded each of the transcripts into NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd, V.12) and using the generated codes mapped these across into the analysis software. Initially I developed a list of over 400 codes. These codes where subsequently reviewed to condense similar codes together or remove duplicates. I was able to then apply these refined codes from the first round of interviews to the observational notes and final focus group interviews (axial coding).

Phase 3 Searching for Themes: Related codes with logical connections were then grouped under parent codes to assist in the development and identification of themes. Continuing with the example from above, the relevant sensory codes were collated under a parent code of "The Swimming Sensorium" (See Figure 3.2). If a code fitted into more than one category, or parent code, it was placed in the one that fitted most relevantly in the context of the study. **Phase 4 Reviewing themes:** This was done via Excel (Microsoft) in which I was able to begin the process of grouping together the parent codes into a thematic map. This thematic map was reconfigured several times to ensure the themes represented the data but were also distinguishable and well defined. **Phase 5 Defining and naming themes:** This was conducted alongside Phase 4 and was aided through discussions with my supervisory team. **Phase 6 Producing the report:** This was a crucial part of the thematic analysis, made even more challenging by the difficulties of trying to represent embodied experiences in written form. The following section deals with these challenges of representation.

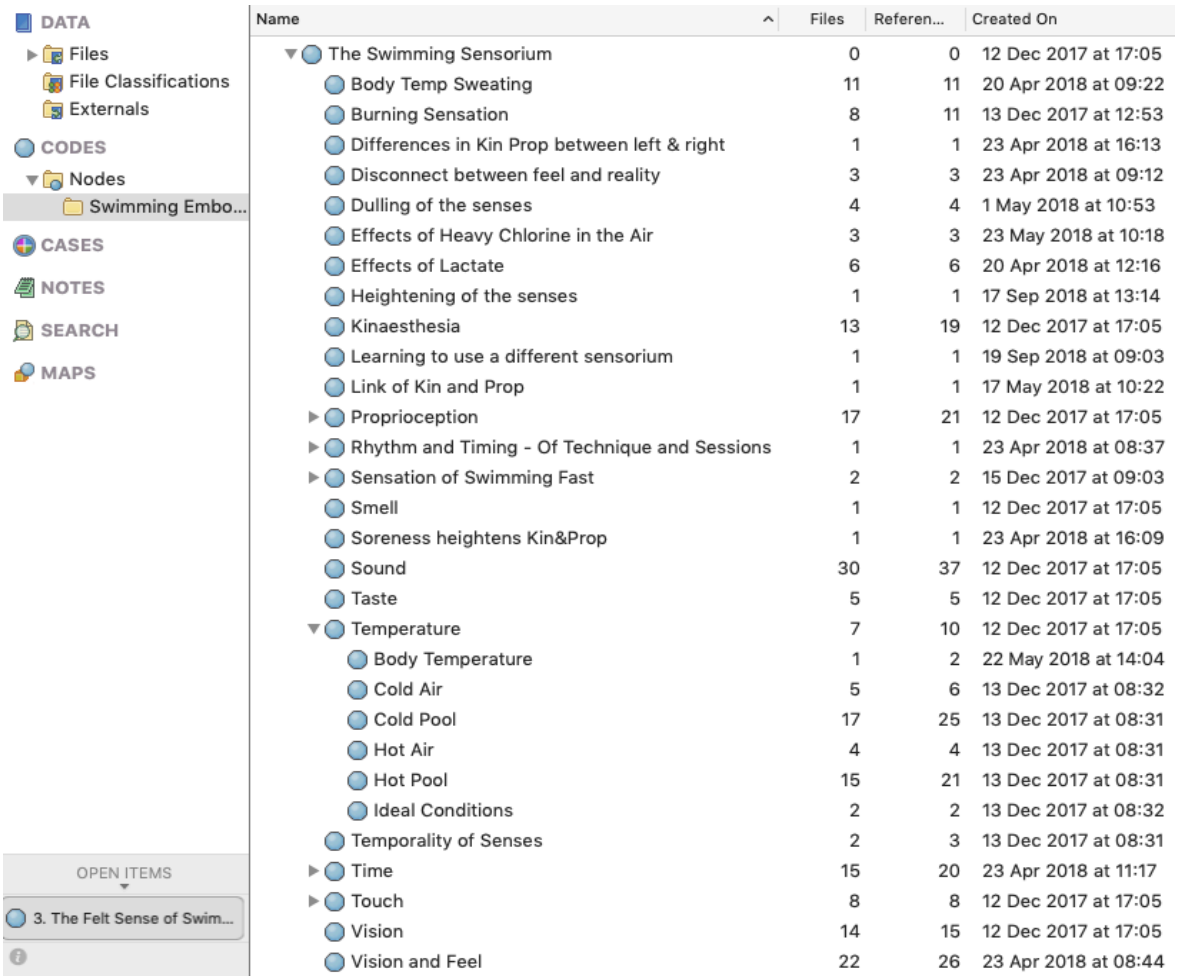

Figure 3.2 Example of NVivo Parent Coding

3.11 Representation, Evaluation, and Generalisability

This penultimate section of the methodological chapter details how the data are represented as well as a discussion of evaluation criteria relevant to this study. Before doing so I feel it pertinent to reiterate the point made earlier in this chapter that although phenomenology is not synonymous with qualitative research (see section 3.2), this study is an ethnographic study employing the qualitative methods of participant observation and interviews to collect qualitative data, to which a sociological-phenomenological analytical lens was then applied. In light of this, issues regarding representation and evaluation of qualitative research will be discussed.

3.11.1 Representation

How qualitative research is written and represented is an important consideration for ethnographers as well as phenomenologically inspired researchers, especially with

sociological-phenomenology's quest to provide highly textured, evocative descriptions of embodied experience. This consequently brings considerable challenges in writing and representation to effectively portray those bodily practices and experiences, some of which are rarely expressed, either verbally or visually, and are what Merchant (2011) refers to as the 'unrepresentable'. As Allen-Collinson (2009, p. 291) notes, to "bring to life" the structures of experience, the researcher must be able to "convey accurately, powerfully, evocatively, and many would advocate aesthetically and poetically (but always inevitably only partially) the phenomena described", in order to generate descriptions that produce a feeling of understanding in the reader (Todres, 2007). Furthermore, as Wacquant (2013, p. 31) reminds us, there is little point in researchers seeking to produce a carnal sociology through a bodily immersion in the field if what is "revealed about the sensorimotor magnetism of the universe in question ends up disappearing later in the writing". Wacquant (2013, p. 30) therefore ask the following question: "How [do we] go from the guts to the intellect, from the comprehension of the flesh to the knowledge of the text?" To achieve this as Allen-Collinson (2009) notes, several authors (e.g. Butler, 2017; Hammer, 2015; McMahon et al., 2019; Merchant, 2019) have moved away from the more orthodox, author-absent-style textual accounts of experience, instead creating narratives that portray in a first-person, evocative-analytic fashion the lived body of sporting experience. As a result, the researcher has become more visible in written embodied accounts because of their evident influence in the construction of the account. The voice of the text, therefore, requires careful consideration, as there is a balance to be achieved between the researcher's voice and those of the researched.

The fact that this project mattered a great deal to me, having inhabited the swimming lifeworld for over 30 years, meant that it involved extensive personal as well as academic investment. There was a lot at stake for me, as I wished to present the depth and nuances of the data in a way that not only did justice to the swimmers' stories and experiences but highlighted my relationship with this lifeworld. Great thought was therefore given as to how best to depict the events that constitute the research and allow the researched and researcher voices to come through. This process was made more challenging in light of the difference between traditional phenomenological and/or sociological styles of writing and

the attempt to capture, however partially, the processes, rhythms and movements involved in swimming practice.

Although my approach to the data was sensitised with my engagement with both phenomenological and sociological concepts, my interaction with the data was not characterised by a rigid methodological approach or by the attempt to impose specific phenomenological or sociological frameworks. This enabled me to remain sensitive to the experiences articulated by the swimmers in their own words. Thus, my approach to producing the thesis involved attending to the resonances between the swimmers' lived experience and the various phenomenological and sociological concepts I had identified in the literature, for example Mauss' (1979) 'body techniques', Leder's (1990) 'dis- and dys-appearing body' and Merleau-Ponty's (1968, 2002) notions of habit, body auxiliaries and intercorporeality, without reducing one to the other, and allowing for each to speak to the other. As a result, throughout this thesis, I have interwoven ethnographic descriptions, conversations, interview extracts, and "creative nonfiction" stories (Smith, McGannon, & Williams, 2015; Sparkes, 2002) with sections of analytical writing in order to not over-theorise or render too abstract the analysis, instead focusing more on the experiential accounts of the swimmers. It is hoped that this combination of the intelligible and sensible does not 'degenerate' the swimmers' experiences into soulless, mechanical, impersonal descriptions but allows for the fleshy, messy, material, and sentient swimming body to be 'heard'.

It should, however, be stated here that even though best efforts were made to stay true to the participants' experiences, there are considerable challenges in this type of representational writing, none more so than the translation of embodied experiences and knowledge into textual representation. Inevitably then the accounts presented in this thesis are partial, incomplete, approximate and 'represent' my best efforts at portraying the experiences, feelings, emotions and sensations of the participants and myself. The following section therefore deals with how this style of writing was evaluated in order for this thesis to maintain a high degree of academic rigour.

3.11.2 Evaluation of Rigour

As well as concerns around the representation of qualitative research, it is also important to consider how to evaluate it. Qualitative research is fundamentally different to quantitative research (Markula & Silk, 2011). Consequently, it is not productive to evaluate qualitative research according to the traditional positivist (and quantitative) conventions of objectivity, reliability, (statistical-probabilistic) generalisability and validity. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998) note, trying to evaluate qualitative research via quantitative criteria is not only incompatible with the very nature of the projects, it is also unsuitable and unproductive. This then leaves us with the question of how the quality of qualitative work should be judged.

A popular starting point and often judged as the 'gold standard' in qualitative work within sport, exercise and health (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 179) was signalled some time ago as the 'parallel perspective' proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1989). They acknowledge that qualitative inquiry is based on fundamentally different ontological and epistemological foundations than that of quantitative enquiry and thus proposed in place of the conventional quantitative criteria a parallel set of criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. They encapsulate each of these in the notion of 'trustworthiness'. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 43) also offered corresponding empirical procedures for addressing each of these parallel criteria, that, if achieved, they believe "adequately (if not absolutely) affirm the trustworthiness of naturalistic approaches".

Their original statements are, however, problematic and the parallel perspective has not been immune to critique, including from Lincoln and Guba themselves as they have evolved their own position since the late 1980s. The parallel perspective has also been questioned vigorously by Sparkes (1998, 2009b) and Sparkes and Smith (2009, 2014) especially when applied to novel or unusual forms of research. For example, ethnography, autoethnography, and sensuous ethnography are all very different processes and products. Using the same criteria to judge the quality of these different forms seems rather contradictory. Approaches to the methodology and methods selected, and the ways in which data are represented in qualitative enquiry, is therefore not homogenous. With this

in mind it thus becomes clear that the phenomenologically inspired sociological perspective, combined with an ethnographic approach as utilised in this study, may require judgement criteria that are more appropriate than the aforementioned 'parallel' criteria.

One answer lies in a relativist approach as opposed to a rigid criteriological one (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). A relativist approach does still enlist the use of criteria, but these criteria are not set in stone prior to the research. Such a position is informed by a non-realist or non-foundational position and appreciates that criteria *may* be used as opposed to *must* be used. As Smith and Hodkinson comment:

> Judgements about social and educational research [therefore become] much more akin to judgements about the quality of works of music, painting, literature, and so on, which depend on time and place contingent lists[9] of characteristics, than they are to the time and place independent 'correct to reality' judgements in the physical sciences (Smith & Hodkinson, 2009, p. 35).

As a result, the list of criteria that Sparkes and Smith (2009, p. 495) refer to as a *'starting point'* for judging quality in this research, is drawn from my interaction with other phenomenologically inspired sociological accounts of the body, and includes the following items that the reader might consider:

1. Do the voices in this project resonate with the voices in other similar studies?
2. Does the story illustrate particular patterns and connections between events?
3. How useful would this story be as a guide for others?
4. What did I/you learn about yourself from the participants' accounts?
5. What new lines of thinking or enquiry did this account bring to the fore?
6. Which assumptions or presuppositions did this account confirm or challenge?
7. Do the stories create evocative and open-ended connections to the data and the reader?
8. Do they involve the emotional dimensions of experience?
9. Do they affect the reader emotionally and/or intellectually?
10. Is the focus on sharing the swimmers' embodied stories, not the interactions between me and coaches?

It is also worth noting that the idea of this list as 'starting point' is an important concept as it allows the list to remain open to interpretation, challenge, and change by myself and others, depending on the context. It would therefore be possible to take this list and over

[9] Smith and Deemer (2000) refer to lists not as something enclosed and precisely specified but as somethings always open-ended, and always subject to constant reinterpretation so that items can be added or taken away.

time develop, refine, and reapply it in different settings and contexts in order to enhance the findings, judgements and conclusions made.

Additionally, utilising an open-ended format to the list allows for markers of 'quality' to remain free of specific paradigmatic practices or epistemic grounds (Smith & Hodkinson, 2009). Instead 'quality' is internalised in the experience and background of the researcher/reader, as well as the underlying assumptions of the study (Amis & Silk, 2008). 'Quality' thus *resides* in and is *revealed* by the research report placing the judgement of 'quality' on both the researcher and the reader (Rolfe, 2006).

A further measure of 'quality' is often linked to how generalisable a piece of research is to the wider community. In this section I therefore deal with the issue of generalisability in qualitative research.

3.11.3 Generalisability

When considering the notion of generalisability in ethnographic research and in qualitative research more widely, there is on-going debate regarding the extent to which findings may be applicable to wider contexts. This is very much the case if qualitative research is held to the same judgement criteria of traditional, (post)positivist notions of generalisability, which many qualitative researchers reject as being entirely inappropriate (Richardson, 2000; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). As Smith (2018) notes, however, whilst qualitative research may not satisfy statistical-probabilistic generalisability, it does meet other forms of generalisability such as naturalistic and analytical generalisability, as well as transferability.

By providing a detailed account of the participants' own lived experiences of the competitive swimming lifeworld, I seek to speak to the reader's experiences of the same, or other similar sporting lifeworlds, thus displaying naturalistic generalisability and transferability (Smith, 2018) to other physical-cultural spheres. For example, when reading about how changes in water temperature can affect training performance, it is hoped readers who have experienced training in hotter or colder than usual temperatures will be able to recognise similar experiences that they have had. In other words, the research bears

familial resemblances to the reader's experiences, settings they move in, events they have witnessed or people they have talked to.

In addition, I address the criterion of analytic generalisability as the results are relatable to current concepts and theories for example, embodiment, techniques of the body, the senses, intercorporeality and the absent body, showing how these concepts and theories that have been used in other research settings are also applicable to investigating the swimming lifeworld. This relates to insights derived from existential phenomenology and sociology as this allied, powerful relationship permits a deep investigation into the structures of sporting and physical activity experiences.

Having now outlined the various methodological choices made within this study, the final section of this chapter, 'the prep-set', sets the scene of the space and place of ANP Swimming.

3.12 'The Prep-set' - The Place and Space of ANP Swimming

The swimming pool at ANP Swimming provides the immediate context for swimming practices and experiences as this is where training, coaching, and social interactions between participants occur most often. It is within this space that the various experiences of the practitioners become saturated with contextualised meanings. This space is significant in the development of embodied swimming experiences and knowledge.

The pool itself is located on a busy university campus in the English Midlands. Built in the early 2000s, it acts as a training facility not just for the various university aquatic teams (swimming, waterpolo, triathlon, canoe, sub aqua), but also various other national governing body squads, local swimming clubs, university gym members and the public. The pool itself is accessed through an automatic door that opens onto a reception area with a turnstile. On passing through the turnstile, there is access to the changing rooms (although rarely if ever used by the swimmers), administration and coaches' offices, and the swimming pool itself. There are boards, plaques, and banners hung throughout the building that form reminders of those who have swum or are still swimming in the facility and have achieved success. The doors that provide access to the pool have a message emblazoned

across them asking those who enter to follow in the footsteps of those who have come before. Stepping through these doors you are greeted by a bright and clean environment that houses an eight lane 50m pool, that is deck level on the sides and raised at either end, with a movable boom that enables the pool to be split into 2x25m pools. Each end of the pool, as well as the boom, is fitted with FINA approved starting blocks. There is also a set of backstroke starting wedges and each lane rope is an anti-wave racing rope. The air is warm but not stifling, however, on certain days this temperature can be higher or lower, with the swimmers often asking for the windows to be opened or closed. There is also the customary and very familiar hint of chlorine in the air. The water always looks clear and crisp, its temperature a very closely maintained 27 degrees which keeps it inside the FINA rules for a competitive swimming event (temperature must be between 25 and 28°C). Music is normally playing from the poolside public address (PA) system to create an atmosphere (but not often appreciated by the swimmers who would ask for a change of playlist). Combined, these features provide a very accommodating and attractive place to train. Additionally, at one end of the pool is a small, land-conditioning (Land-Con) room, which is equipped with vinyl covered mats, a pull up frame, medicine balls, dumbbells, a versa trainer, a climbing machine and an old multigym machine. The swimmers use this space mainly for pre- and post-pool mobility and stretching sessions, as well as a weekly circuit. Their main strength and conditioning sessions take place in a specialist strength and conditioning facility also located on campus, within five minutes' walk of the pool (Fieldnotes, October 2017). Having introduced the place and space of the ANP Swimming pool, I now turn to describe the set-up of the swimming programme in more detail, including introducing the coaches who through their level of involvement, experience, and personalities shape, and are shaped by the programme.

At the time of data collection there were three squads within the ANP Swimming programme; two performance squads and one national squad. Each of the performance squads had between 16 and 20 members with a further 20 plus members in the national squad. For the purpose of this study I focused on the two performance squads as they provided the best access to the events, settings, actors and artefacts (Marshall & Rossman, 2015) that directly related to the phenomenon under investigation and satisfied the inclusion criteria as outlined in section 2.6.1. Each of these squads has selection and

consideration times that need to be achieved if swimmers wish to be considered for membership. These times become more challenging the longer the swimmers stay in the programme, in a way that ensures that swimmers either continue to improve or they are removed from the programme. This might seem a tough stance to take but with limited numbers in each of the performance squads it allows the coaches the opportunity to assess swimmers' progress and their continued suitability for the groups. If swimmers meet a selection time they are then further categorised into a bronze, silver, gold, or platinum category. These categories allow them access to differing levels of support services from physiotherapy, massage and sport science support, including nutritional advice. Along with meeting these selection times and being categorised, there is a minimum requirement for attendance per week. This differs depending on which events swimmers compete in but is usually between eight and ten sessions in the pool plus three to five land-based sessions. At the time of investigation of the 16 to 20 swimmers in each performance squad there was a fairly even distribution of men and women. In Nick's squad there was a total of 18 swimmers, nine men and nine women. In Tony's group there were 17 swimmers, seven men and ten women. All swimmers were between the ages of 18 and 22 and were predominantly, but not exclusively, white-British, with the exception of one white-Irish male, two women of black-British descent and one woman of white-French descent (Fieldnotes October 2017; February 2018; July 2018).

Due to the nature of the programme being a university programme, all the swimmers, with the exception of one, were registered on full or part-time programmes of study across a range of disciplines from aeronautical engineering to sports science and fine art. These were not recreational swimmers, they were all highly committed competitive athletes, some of whom were funded through British Swimming and UK Sport, but the majority were still what would be deemed amateur, receiving no funding or support other than what they or their parents could provide, or what their level within the performance structure afforded them from the university in terms of scholarship, physiotherapy, massage or sports science support. Additionally, due to the university environment it was very rare for new or different faces to enter the squads during the season, with changes in personnel mainly taking place as a result of people beginning, or graduating from, their periods of study at ANP Swimming, or simply retiring from the sport. Occasionally there may have

been what to me was an unfamiliar face 'drop in' for a session or two, but often these were ANP Swimming graduates or former members of the team who were now training elsewhere and were therefore known to the coaches. This 'closed' context is potentially a very different social environment than that found in more traditional swimming clubs or sports clubs in general where faces could change regularly as people move in or out of the programme throughout a season. This latter would be similar to the context of Wacquant's (2004) boxing ethnography where the social milieu of the gym was in constant flux due to the comings and goings and comings again of boxers new and old.

These swimmers and the performance squads were overseen by Nick, who was the director of swimming, and Tony, who was the head coach. On first appearance these titles don't seem to reflect any apparent difference as Nick and Tony worked closely together (alongside Reid who was in charge of the national squad) to ensure the effective delivery of the programme as a whole. In practice this involved the planning and running of various training sessions that take place at the pool, in addition to the day-to-day running of the programme, which included but wasn't limited to liaising with other support staff, attendance at meetings, and planning of competition calendars. There was, therefore, a clear distinction between the categories of swimmer and coach in the programme. Each inhabits one of these roles only, it is not a fluid situation were positions switch. Nick and Tony both, however, have a background in the sport as competitive athletes at the highest level, and each has coached swimmers to senior international competitions including the European and World Championships, and the Commonwealth and Olympic Games. As a result, both coaches have occupied both the swimmer and coach positions, although not at the same time. Both coaches are male, white, and British, and neither of the coaches took up swimming with a view to becoming coaches. It is something that both have, however, made a professional commitment to. For both coaches this role is their main source of paid employment. Both hold sport related degrees, received from ANP Swimming, as well as other recognised coaching qualifications. It is this experience that affords them the ability to lead, coach, and guide their respective performance groups and the team as a whole. Consequently, swimming plays a significant part in the coaches' and swimmers' lives, resulting in them developing close working relationships that often extend beyond the basic coach to athlete relationship, where the athletes from time to time come

to the coaches with issues that are non-swimming related, seeking advice (fieldwork notes October 2017; February, 2018; July, 2018). Having introduced the reader to space and place of ANP Swimming, the following chapters will focus on the key themes generated from the data derived from the inhabitants of this aquatic lifeworld.

3.13 Summary and Concluding Thoughts on the Methodology

Within this chapter I outlined the paradigmatic underpinnings of this project, before discussing the cornerstones to the phenomenological research approach. I described how the phenomenological concept of epochē or bracketing was engaged with as a cornerstone of a phenomenological project of this nature. I then outlined my ethnographic methodology and reflected on the ethical considerations, as well as the process of immersing myself in the field. I described and justified my chosen data collection tools of observations and interviewing, outlining how these enabled me to better understand the phenomenon of competitive swimming. I then described some of the challenges in withdrawing from the field before detailing how the data were subsequently analysed. In the final section I addressed the question of how best to represent and evaluate this research project.

Before moving on to my discussion chapters, however, I would just like to add some concluding thoughts on the process of data collection, analysis and representation. Although, presented in this chapter as taking a fairly logical format, in reality it was a little messier and involved much 'toing and froing' between data collection and analysis steps. Quite often it was the time between stages of data collection and the drafting and redrafting of chapters that allowed themes and analytical threads to be developed and refined the most. I would, however, be lying if I said that during this phase of the project I did not pine to be back amongst the team, dedicating my days to their schedule and enjoying being an accepted member of the team. Writing is very different to being part of the day to day experience of data collection. Indeed, the shared nature of data collection that involves 'people work' in which ideas and impressions are formed on the spot between researcher and the researched, versus the solitude and individuality of writing, often resulted in moments of frustration as I tried to mould, mesh and transform these interaction and experiences into illustrative concepts and written word. Staying in touch

with the programme through messages, twitter, and drop in visits therefore helped me to maintain a level of 'realness' with the people and experiences I was in the process of portraying. In doing so, I was able to maintain a level of connection to the individuals and events of the fieldwork as I sat at my desk. What therefore is presented in the following chapters is the summation of the swimmers' own words and experiences aligned with my interpretation of the experiences from the field.

The next chapter, Chapter 4 is the first of five chapters that combine to form my findings and analysis or in swimming terms, 'the main set'.

Results and Discussion – 'The Main Set'

The following five chapters form the results and discussion, or in keeping with the swimming training links, they form what would be referred to as the 'main set'. These five chapters attend to the key themes within the data, much like a main set would focus on the key outcome(s) for a training session. I draw upon Mauss, Merleau-Ponty, Schütz and Leder among others to highlight the swimmer's stories of embodiment, that are sensory, painful, intersubjective and intercorporeal and how these experiences form the essences of this particular swimming lifeworld.

The second of these five chapters, Chapter 5, focuses on the embodied doing of swimming outlining some of the body techniques and habits acquired by the swimmers and how these are put into action. Chapter 6 illuminates the shifted swimming sensorium exploring the haptic dimension, the visual and the link between those two sensory modes of perception, as well as then portraying the sense of inner time, or durée (Schütz, 1967). Following this Chapter 7 extends the sensory discussion by looking at the various types of discomfort and pain that swimmers are exposed to as well their enduring of these. Finally, Chapter 8 then moves to detail the intersubjective and intercorporeal nature of competitive swimming, a position that challenges the notion of swimming as an individual sport.

Before delving deeper into these embodied experiences however, I feel it timely to introduce the reader to how the participants/characters represented in this study came to inhabit this particular lifeworld and some of the motivations for their continued participation; a process I shall refer to as 'becoming and remaining'. It is hoped that by interrogating the fabric of these journeys, as well as their reasons for swimming, all of which are not readily available to those uninitiated to the competitive swimming lifeworld, will help bring to life the swimmers, their practices, and their experiences.

Chapter 4: Becoming and Remaining

This chapter outlines the varying journeys that the swimmers have taken to arrive at this point in their careers, including some of the milestones and challenges that they have confronted, the reasons why they swim, and how these have influenced how they identify themselves as swimmers in and out of the pool.

4.1 Becoming

For many of the swimmers, immersion into swimming began at an early age, attending swimming lessons between the ages of two and five before moving into more formalised club swimming programmes between the ages of six and ten, and then starting to swim competitively between the ages of nine and eleven. For several of these swimmers the influence of other family members, for example, parents who had been swimmers or older siblings who were already involved in the sport, proved a deciding factor in their initial engagement with swimming as a sport. Such a position coheres with the work of Baxter-Jones and Maffulli (2003) who found that 70 percent of the swimmers in their study had been introduced to the sport by their parents (See Beets, Cardinal, & Alderman, 2010; Wheeler, 2012 for further evidene of parental influence on sport participation).

These journeys were, however, not always smooth often involving changes of clubs, changes of coaches, and in some cases time out of the sport before arriving at ANP Swimming and their current level of performance. As Bruce comments:

> ***Bruce***: I sort of swum competitively from about nine to 13 [and] I was routinely training six/seven times a week. Then from about 14 through to 18 I, in reality, I sort of basically quit...so I was sort of, I was turning up to three, four sessions a month, which like if you're looking back on it, it's just stupid how I am still here. But I'd turn up three, four sessions a month, had no gym programme. Throughout my entire swimming career, I've had about 20 different coaches. I've never had a coach for longer than a year and a half and there was a period when I had about 10 coaches within three months. The club was just rattling through them; hiring them, sacking them. I mean I've never had a reliable coaching source. So, yeah, I just completely lost interest in the sport, I was, you know, in a team of individuals, like children and I was the oldest there. I had no competitors; I had no desire to be there when I was training. But I'd still turn up and race. I'd do county champs and then I'd do regionals and then I'd make it to nationals every year. I'd still qualify for nationals every year, hmm on the back of four sessions a month or whatever it was

GMC: [laughs]
Bruce: I went to British nationals at the age of 16. My first nationals was when I was 13, I swam 13, 14, 15. When I was 16, in my 16th year, I went to British nationals and swam the 50m free, 50m fly and the 100m free. 50m free I got a silver medal in…
GMC: [laugh] on four sessions a month [said in a snigger]
Bruce: …eh, a silver medal and I swam 23.40, which in, to put that into perspective that's just outside a silver time for this team. So, you know the performance structure, 23.40 is just outside the silver time
GMC: at 16?
Bruce: at 16, yeah (Bruce Interview, 19th October 2017).

Although Bruce's experience is perhaps an extreme example, of the 19 swimmers interviewed 14 mentioned having had to move clubs or had coach changes at least once while being an age-group/youth swimmer. For Charles this actually involved him having to leave a club where his father was the coach, because other members of the club felt his father was showing him favouritism in catering the sessions towards his needs after he won a national age-group title in 2009. This decision started a chain of events for Charles that resulted in him having to train on his own in a pool at a friend's home for a period of around six months.

Not all of these reported incidences were for negative reasons, however, with some swimmers moving from smaller clubs that could no longer provide the level of coaching, training, and competition required, to bigger clubs, in order to keep progressing. As Mary-Jane explained:

> …my home club…was very, you swam for fun. It was something to do in the evenings. Erm, it wasn't very, I mean it was competitive within the club and you know what it's like with parents being competitive and things, but we never really went away for competitions or swim camps or anything. And then in, at [new club] we, there was more of an emphasis on like counties, regionals and nationals. There was always that aim about, these are the nationals' times try and get those…[and] we would go, like we would travel to erm, like, Surrey, Manchester and places for competitions, so there was just, it was just more kind of, important I guess (Mary-Jane Interview, 3rd November 2017).

Despite these commonalities and differences, and with all the swimmers interviewed having now competed at a minimum of British Senior Championship level, for many of the swimmers achieving what are often regarded within the swimming community as

significant swimming milestones (e.g. qualifying for first age/youth/summer national event) occurred at very different ages. Some, like Jean and Charles, were winning medals at British age-group and youth nationals from when they were eleven. For Jean, this early success actually then became somewhat of burden to her:

> I was still very much doing age-group based work up until the age of 14, when I moved into…the senior squad…that's when I started to like plateau…I was like hitting like the similar, similar times, and…I was always being like point one off my pb or pb-ing by point one. It was always very similar consistent times, and on one hand like that was great cos I was being consistent but at the same time everyone, that's when everyone else in my age group started to drop and I was just kind of like staying at the level. So, I went from being ahead, to then just dropping further and further down the rankings, not because I was getting slower but cos everyone else was getting faster…at the time I was really like, negative about what I was achieving so like even though…when I was 15/16 I was making finals and I was coming like fourth, fifth, sixth in finals, from an outsider perspective or people who aren't even making finals, like they're like 'oh my god that's so good' but then I think because, I performed at such a high standard when I was young, getting knocked back to that, was, like, I was literally, like, excuse my language but I was like "I'm shit, I'm a shit swimmer" when actually like looking back now and reflecting on that, that's not the case at all (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).

For others like Wade, Jessica, and Logan, qualifying for these national level events came much later at around 15 or 16, with Wade actually securing his first national medal at the 2018 British Summer Championships aged 20. Which in swimming terms would be regarded as late, with the majority of medal winners securing their first national level medal in their early to mid-teens. When asked if he felt this late development was a positive thing Wade commented:

> I think so, I think it's helped me, enjoy it more, in a way. Like developing like late if you know what I mean like, because when I was younger, there is a lot of people when they are younger are winning everything, I wasn't used to that. I've never like won anything. I've always been like second, third best. Do you know what I mean? Even in my region I was always, like second or third or fourth or I was never that number one, do you know what I mean like. I think it's helped cos it's motivated me to get to that point. I want, I want to get to that point. I want to be able to feel what it's like to be first. Do you know what I mean? Like I think, that's helped a lot. Cos I've just been getting closer and closer to that point and I think it's motivated me cos I don't want to stop until I do get there (Wade Interview, 1st November 2017).

Additionally, some athletes followed what certain coaches and National Governing Body officials would deem the desired progression through junior international events, including the European Youth Olympic Festival and European Junior Championships on to senior events, while others never competed at these junior international levels but have gone on to represent Great Britain at senior international meets including the European Short and Long Course Championships, The World Championships and the Commonwealth Games. Gaining selection for these events is, however, no easy feat were only the top one or two swimmers in each event at the relevant selection competition are considered, and only if they have achieved what are usually strict qualification times. These experiences can therefore be extremely positive if selected, but also create moments of great disappointment if unsuccessful. For Scott, even though he represented Great Britain at the European Juniors and England at the Commonwealth Youth Games in the summer before arriving at ANP Swimming, he still spoke of the disappointment and challenge of not making the European Juniors team the previous year, and how it helped him refocus his efforts:

> ***Scott***: So…after the success of nationals, I had the Olympic trials…in Glasgow. I wasn't going for the Olympics, but I was going for the European junior team. I think that was in Hungary, and I think the criteria was winning the junior event and getting a qualifying time. So, to be considered, you had to win the event, be the fastest junior, and then to get selected 100 percent…you have to get a time, but just to be considered you have to win. And I actually, I won the 200. So, it was 17/18 and I was still 17, and I won the 200 IM juniors. So, I…beat the 18-year olds, but I missed the time, so obviously I had to wait to find out whether I made the team or not, and I didn't actually make the team. So…that was quite hard, because I had quite a few friends that made the team and then I had to see it on social media and stuff, like them out there, swimming really well, and that was quite hard. And then I had, yeah, so that knocked me back to reality a bit, going from getting my own way in nationals and then getting to trials and, yeah.
> ***GMC***: Getting so close but yet so far.
> ***Scott***: You're nowhere near where you want to be, which, I needed to like focus again, and it gave me more motivation to get on to the team next year (Scott Interview, 31st October 2017).

Although Scott did make the European Junior team the next season, he still experienced disappointment at the selection trails as he missed out on the team for the World Junior Championships, creating a bittersweet range of emotions. He was pleased to make the European team but disappointed to have missed out on the World's team which had been his ultimate aim. Outside of the challenges and disappointments of not making teams,

other swimmers spoke of the challenges of conflict within clubs, of losing funding, of getting injured, or of self-criticism and self-doubt. Matthew highlights how these latter, self-criticism and self-doubt, can occur even in the face of success:

> Like sometimes I might have gotten a pb but I'd still at the end of the night, I'd probably go to bed and be like "why am I doing this, it's not worth it, I'm not good enough, I'm not even like getting to finals at these European levels". Like I was very, very brutal on myself like I was never nice. I was always the guy who came out of a race, probably got pb, came out and was [sighs] "it's not good enough". Always, always that kind of guy. I've kind of eased off a bit because if I did that for three years straight in my plateau, I would of fucking quit ages ago (Matthew Interview, 23rd October 2017).

These self-doubts and self-criticisms are not isolated to racing experiences, but can also creep into the swimmers' thought processes during training, as Jean notes:

> Erm…so if…I'm working really hard and I'm not performing, how I'd want to perform in the session, that's when mentally I start to, I just start to beat myself up…Like I'm, I'm really tough on myself I'd say with regards to my expectations of myself, erm, yeah. I compare myself to say like, so [swimmer name] like, her pb is, she is faster than me, she is a faster swimmer than me, but in training if I can't keep up with her in my head, I've had a bad session. Even though relatively I shouldn't be keeping up, if I don't, I've had a bad session (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Both Matthew's and Jean's position are not uncommon in a sporting lifeworld such as competitive swimming where performance is dependent on and measured by time, and where participants strive for excellence by setting themselves high targets. It is therefore hardly surprising to see swimmers become disappointed or display existential angst about not being good enough, when things don't quite go their way. Such a phenomenon is often referred to as 'perfectionism' and has been addressed extensively from a psychological perspective (see Flett & Hewitt, 2002, 2005; Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990; Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffet, 2002). Perfectionism, however, is not simply a psychological phenomenon. As Greenspon (2000, p. 207) notes, "perfectionism is not a particular set of [psychological] behaviours…It is a phenomenon that is truly intersubjective: It arises out of the interaction between the worlds of experience of two or more people". The self-doubt and self-criticism shown by Matthew and Jean could therefore be personal to them but also grounded in the characteristics of their chosen physical-culture and their broader socio-cultural background more generally. Through these experiences they, and others,

have been socialised into a particular way of viewing their world and the relationship they have with themselves and others. Such a relationship could then bear influence on their behaviours and bring forth certain performance anxieties, that may be rooted in the feeling of never being good enough, but also in not wanting to let other people down. A position that echoes from my time as a coach, were certain athletes expressed worries about the outcome of their race in case they let me down with their performance, or their performance would somehow make me think less of them.

The purpose of portraying these different journeys, successes, and challenges encountered by the swimmers, is to highlight that the path to success is often varied and very rarely smooth. It should also be stressed at this point that despite the diverse journeys taken by these swimmers, not everyone can become a competitive swimmer, or indeed wants to become one. For many people both inside and outside of the sport, competitive swimming is unachievable. For example, there remains a significant proportion of the UK population that has never learnt to swim (1 in 5 adults – Amateur Swimming Association, 2015), or swim confidently, rendering competitive swimming beyond imagination. For others, the demands of competitive swimming are simply deemed excessive. Firstly, it is physically punishing, with swimmers regularly completing anything from 7 to 10 pool sessions, spanning 12 to 24 hours in the water, covering 25 to 100 kilometres of swimming each week depending on their event, alongside regular dry land training that could, and often does include weight training, circuits, yoga, Pilates and Spin sessions. In light of this it is therefore possible to conceptualise the swimmer's participation in swimming as *work* rather than leisure, as Bale (2004) portrays in relation to running. This demands highly disciplined, regular, and routine engagement. Secondly, like many serious athletic pursuits, competitive swimming, for those not lucky enough to secure funding from external bodies, is a 'greedy avocation' (Gillespe, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002), consuming financial resources as well as emotional energy and time in ways that to some signify a solipsistic over-investment in the self (Throsby, 2016). There are club training fees, training kit, racing suits that range from £100-£300 in price and have a limited life of use, competition entries that can be up to £25 per event swum, as well as travel and hotel costs for competitions and training camps. These factors, for some, constitute obstacles to their willingness even to consider competitive swimming as a site of bodily investment.

The desire and ability to imagine and undertake the transformations demanded by competitive swimming do, however, not arise out of nowhere, especially when from the outside looking in, one might question how anyone could ever find pleasure in something that does not seem inherently or self-evidently pleasurable (Throsby, 2016). The next section therefore illuminates some of the reasons as to why the swimmers remain engaged in the sport.

4.2 Remaining

When asked why they swim, the majority of responses from those interviewed related to a love for the sport and a desire to succeed. As Bruce commented in his interview:

> I want to be the best. So, when I'm in those sessions, when I'm racing Ben and Luke and I'm up against Logan, I want to be the one that beats them, and they want to be the ones that beat me (Bruce Interview, 19th October 2017).

Bruce continues saying "I mean, I love swimming, I love being in the pool, I love the speed sets that we do, I mean I love pushing myself". In doing so he highlights not only his love for 'doing' the sport but also for swimming allowing him a space or vehicle through which to 'push' himself. This is a common thread throughout the sports literature, where athletes aim to train through and triumph over fatigue and pain in order to go faster and harder for longer, pushing their bodies to, and sometimes past, their limits. For example, Atkinson (2008a, p. 296) when discussing triathlon, reports how one participant, a Canadian varsity swimmer, would use triathlon as a way to supplement her winter swim training by "rigorously challenging her body's own limits" and how she enjoys "going redline in training and competition". Andreasson and Johansson (2019) note a similar position in relation to bodybuilders, triathletes and MMA fighters, where a 'pushing the limits' discourse is prominent in the narratives they present in their book *Extreme Sports, Extreme Bodies*. Although the 'limits' for each of these sports is different (e.g. bodybuilders increasing muscle size, triathletes pushing through physical endurance limits) the narratives are constructed through the athletes embodied ways of enjoying their body and sport; a discourse built on and produced by each individual athlete's desire to "shape, feel and live the[ir] body" (p. 216).

Additionally, Hanold (2010), notes how ultrarunning emphasises being tough, pushing the limits of the body, and accepting the inevitable practices of pain and injury in the pursuit of completing events equal to or in advance of 50km that can sometimes span several days. The performance narrative in ultrarunning for the majority of her participants is therefore shaped by pushing one's physical limits to ensure finishing, irrespective of placing or time, and is reinforced through the participants' actions, attitudes, and practices. For those who are interesting in winning, for the elite ultrarunner, their discursive construction was still first and foremost grounded in the pushing of one's body beyond its perceived limits but was aligned with a desire to win races and set records. Furthermore, and specifically germane to the swimming lifeworld, Throsby (2016, p. 10) refers to marathon swimming as an extreme sport not because of the obvious risks that, for example, a free climber or BASE (Building, Antenna, Span and Earth) jumper would take, but because of "its commitment to *excess* and to the testing of bodily limits". Marathon swimmers would complete swims that would leave them exhausted, with a view to increasing their capacity for suffering and raising the threshold at which suffering, and exhaustion are experienced.

Similar to Bruce and these accounts from other sports, Eddie also comments on his love for the sport but adds a further dimension in regard to how the physical effects of pushing the limits make him feel (See chapter 7 for further exploration of discomfort, fatigue, pain and enduring):

> …last year was such a big year for me, because all I wanted to do was just swim. I literally put everything aside, like even uni. [I] didn't go into class like that much, I literally just wanted to swim, and it was my biggest year that I've had just because I loved it. Like, I would be up for every morning, I would be up for every night. I just, I love feeling sore. I just love feeling like shit sometimes…like in my home club, it was cool not to care about swimming. But I wasn't like that, [I was a] bit of an outcast, if you know what I mean. Because I was like, "I fucking love this shit" (Laughing) (Eddie Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Eddie continues and develops his position further by mentioning how the sport also helped him with some weight issues when he was younger and provided him with the opportunity to satisfy his 'competitive nature', both of which helped solidify his love for the sport at an early age:

> ***Eddie***: Yeah. Well, it helped me with a lot of stuff, like when I was younger. I was kind of a big kid, so like it, swimming just helped, and I just loved the competitiveness of swimming, and I just loved swimming. (Laughing) I literally just loved it.
> ***GMC***: So, you found that being in water, and being able to race and compete against other people in water was like a perfect –
> ***Eddie***: Yeah, I just loved it (Eddie Interview, 2nd November 2017).

These are just two examples that highlight the swimmers' expressed love for the sport and their desire to succeed. This stance was equally evident in the swimmers' actions during training. The following fieldnote from the 24th October 2017 shows the desire and commitment of both Charles and Scott to their particular set[10]; a gruelling combination of light or 'white[11]' aerobic 50 metre freestyle repeats on 50 seconds and 400 metre Individual Medleys on five minutes 40 seconds (5:40), a time that they themselves agreed upon. The plan for the set was to keep the 50s comfortable but the 400s had to descend in time each round:

> The first 5x400s went off without any real concern. Scott on number six was only slightly faster, but when he heard his time he thought he was slower, and the disappointment was evident on his face and in his "fuck sake" comment. I repeated his time and told him it was still faster by 0.5 of a second but he still wasn't happy. "That one hurt" he says! Charles was pretty metronomic in his set. In the first six reps, the 100m of butterfly at the start was basically the same time and then he just worked the remaining three strokes that little bit harder each round consistently dropping from 5:04 to 4:42 over the six. [At this point] Charles asks if he and Scott can go head to head on the last rep. I head off to ask Nick [Director of Swimming] if we can have another lane. Luckily there is one spare, so we shift over from lane seven to lanes one and two. The boys get a little extra rest because of this move but then they both step up and deliver a great last 400. Charles says he wanted to go under 4:40 and goes 4:32. Scott was just hoping to go faster than number six and goes 4:38. They are both glowing red in the face, Charles even glowing red around his chest and back (Fieldnote, 24th October 2017).

When asked about this set during his interview later in the same week Charles commented:

> I really like doing sets like that, especially when you're feeling good like, cos like no matter like how hard the set is, well if it's a hard set I'll always like push the last rep just to see what like I can do like. Just see where I'm at…Tuesday morning was different because I think I started off too hard. Normally I'm

[10] Set is the term used to demote a block of work that the swimmers complete during a session
[11] The coaches at ANP Swimming use a colour system to denote various swimming intensities. The full range of colours and their representative intensities can be found in appendix 11

> quite good at like holding back and then like building into it. But err, like Tuesday morning I got to the second rep and I think my heart-rate was like 165 or something. It was, it was just hard like, I remember I think it was the fourth rep every time I took a breath on the breaststroke like, I just thought I was gonna pass out. I remember finishing it and thinking like 'shit, we've still got another like 3 rounds of this' (Charles Interview, 26th October 2017).

Despite this initial feeling, Charles's desire to succeed carried him through. This is not an isolated incident either. Most of the swimmers observed and interviewed showed this desire to succeed. I asked the swimmers about this during the group interviews, asking if they had a desire to succeed or a desire to improve. Emphatically the response was to succeed, with Hope commenting that "if you succeed you have improved" and Frank followed this with "we are all in competitive sport so we kind of want to succeed in some way" (Group Interview 2, 10th July 2018). Additionally, Stephen in his interview commented "…there's nothing to compare to that feeling when you win a race", placing success above all other. He goes on to say in reference to a particularly impressive set he did one evening:

> …in the prep-set I wasn't that fast cos I couldn't fly kick properly. So, in the back of my head, there's a voice going, you know "you can't, you're not going to swim fast this session, cos that's that". But I ended up pulling and just doing what Nick said was, "an incredible set", cos you just, it's all completely mental. And the buzz you get, so you can be having the worst day ever and I don't know, girlfriend dumped you, you can be having a terrible day and you get a big set like that, then you smash the set, well for me personally I'll smash the set, I'll do something that they say, I don't know, say is incredible or you're a machine and I'll just be buzzing. It just changes you. That's probably why I swim, just for that. You are someone when you've done that. You're like, like, do you know what I mean. That's, you can't get that anywhere else, that just absolutely beasting it. You're going towards your goal, you just, the adrenaline buzz just from smashing a set. What's even better when you're at a competition and you, so in the summer I went 54.7 in the relay and in the same session went 1:59 200m back, so it was, like the buzz, the buzz after that, after the years of being disappointed and knowing that you're capable of times like this but then actually, you can't get that anywhere else, if you know what I mean, that, that, erm, unstoppable feeling. That's why I swim (Stephen Interview, 17th October 2017).

Even in times of adversity, the swimmers' love for, and desire to succeed in the sport was notable, keeping them motivated, keeping them hungry, as Mary-Jane shows in the following extract recalling a particularly tough period that included dealing not only with an injury, but a breakdown in her relationship with her coach:

> …I think having an injury and having, being in the position where I was falling out with Tony and, I didn't know if I was gonna swim after [champs], but even before he like erm like said that and like threatened it, I think it shows, it just like reminds me how I like love swimming and that, because I so could of quit after my injury and I so could have easily quit when things got bad with Tony, but actually it re, I guess it like reminded me how much swimming actually meant to me and how much, I wanted to, I want to swim (Mary-Jane Interview, 3rd November 2017).

As each of these examples illustrates, these swimmers are not simply doing what they do for the sake of doing it. Being a swimmer at this level and putting themselves through the volume of training required, for what is often very limited financial reward or opportunities for international selection, indicates a much deeper affiliation with the sport. I now proceed to highlight how the sport acts back upon the swimmers, giving rise to a salient swimming identity. How it inhabits them. How each of them has a look that 'screams' swimmer: lean(ish), muscular physiques with broad shoulders and often unkempt and chlorine bleached hair. The sport has not only shaped them physically but emotionally and socially as well. As a result, these athletes firmly identify themselves as 'swimmers', claiming a swimming identity that is fundamentally grounded in what they do, as the following extract from Jean's interview shows:

> ***GMC***: One thing that comes across very clearly is that there is a big emotional attachment to swimming for you guys.
> ***Jean***: Oh yeah definitely.
> ***GMC***: It's a big part of who you guys are as people…
> ***Jean***: Yeah massively, I'd say, I'd say with any swimmer as well, but like especially me like at school, I was 'the swimmer' like that's, that's, that's your identity, erm to a lot of people, like you are a swimmer. Erm and if I'm honest, I think that's why a lot of people continue swimming for as long as they do. Even though they say they hate it, it's because they are scared of what their identity will be after swimming. Erm, so for me, when I stopped swimming, I was scared, I was like, what, like, what do I do now (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Jean in her final sentence is referring to when she had a break from the sport for a period of time before coming to ANP Swimming and re-engaging with swimming. The following passage shows how on her return she felt she had a much more balanced approach to the sport, with the final few lines illuminating what such an all-encompassing sport can mean to these athletes on a personal level:

> I feel like I've got a really balanced mind-set and I'm in a very good place at the mom(ent), very good place, cos I'm just content with swimming and knowing that, I'm not going to be a swimmer forever, I've accepted that and, there is no kind of like pressure or expectation to perform because I've seen the other side of, of life really. Erm, and eh, at the end of the day, even though you are so emotional, I am so emotionally attached to swimming, erm, it's only swimming. It's not the be all and end all. I think you get caught up…in it so much because it's like a full-time job, really, like, you put so much time and effort in, erm and emot(ion), and you put your emotion into it. You push yourself so hard. You definitely love it as if it was like a physical being, I think. So, erm, yeah, when it, when it, so when I stopped swimming, it was, it was a bit like a break-up [laughter] (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Logan shares a similar point of view when discussing his relationship with swimming while attending private school and his subsequent involvement with ANP Swimming. He recalls how he never envisaged a time when he couldn't picture himself not swimming and how the sport is linked to his identity. Something that he feels also extends to the wider swimming community:

> ***Logan***: It's sort of, it's a sense of like it's my identity, do you know what I mean? If someone asks me, "Oh, yeah, I'm Logan, I'm a swimmer", like it's part of who I am, and I just couldn't picture myself, "Oh I'm Logan and I'm a… what?" Do you know what I mean? What am I?
> ***GMC***: Okay, that's interesting how you sort of use swimming as a sort of an identity thing as well.
> ***Logan***: Yeah. I think quite a lot of people actually do that and that's the reason why quite a lot of people when they stop swimming, they really miss it because…they feel a bit lost (Logan Interview, 12th October 2017).

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the multiple ways in which the swimmers have arrived at ANP Swimming, and how these individual journeys, although sharing some commonalities, also have individualised elements. There is seemingly thus no single way of 'becoming and remaining' a competitive swimmer and the pathway may be complex, filled with opportunities, challenges, successes, and failures, but all wrapped up in a love and dedication to a sport that gives these individuals as a member of a specific swimming lifeworld a specific identity that is different to those from the outside. This position thus affords these athletes a specific set of embodied experiences, including sensory embodiment, and it is these experiences that the following three chapters will look to explore further.

Chapter 5: 'Doing' – The Skilled Practice of Swimming

A training session like any other

Be it an early morning or an evening session the swimmers arrive at the pool carrying bags emblazoned with the logos of various swim companies or national teams, bypassing the changing rooms and heading for their self-appointed changing spot on poolside. As they begin to strip off the layers of clothing on poolside, I am struck by a sense of how normal this is for them to simply change here on poolside using towels or long t-shirts to cover themselves while they put on their trunks or costume. They have all seemingly mastered the art of this poolside change, removing clothing in specific ways so as to avoid revealing too much of themselves, yet comfortable enough to be chatting, joking, laughing and being at complete ease with one another and the environment around them as they perform this ritual. As a former swimmer, I'm not surprised by this ritual as I have seen it many times before. As a researcher, however, I begin to wonder how this appears to the eyes of the non-swimming enculturated public who are also present. A position that was made apparent by Tony's and Nick's line manager who, on visiting the pool one evening, commented on not knowing where to look when the swimmers were in full change mode.

With costumes on and straightened out, the swimmers drift towards the land-conditioning room to begin their pre-pool routines. This series of movement checks and stretching exercises is designed to prepare the swimmers for entering the water by affording them the time to check various body parts for stiffness or soreness as a result of the previous sessions and take the necessary steps to help alleviate this. As the swimmers continue this routine the coaches, Nick and Tony, come out from the office armed with their session plans printed on to sheets of A4 paper. They survey the swimmers, checking if they are all here, watching how they are performing their pre-pool, greeting and talking with a few of them as they go past.

With pre-pool completed each coach gathers their respective group of swimmers together to detail the plan for the session (See appendices 8 and 9 for session examples). The swimmers follow the session on the printed sheets as it's explained. The swimmers receive information regarding the session content in a language that is specific to each coach and the programme, including acronyms and references to different colours that denote different strokes or intensities of swimming. For example; 'Fr' or 'Fc' would refer to Frontcrawl; '15m Platinum' would equate to 15m of swimming as fast as possible with perfect technique; '50m@∆100' corresponds to 50 metres of swimming at 100 metre Race Pace; and 300m Red equals 300 metres of swimming at an anaerobic threshold pace at a heart-rate of around 160 to 170 beats per minute (see appendix 7 for full glossary of terms). Information on which of the sets each swimmer will do, the purpose of that set, and anything specific the swimmers are to focus on during the different elements of the session is also delivered at this time. For example, the swimmers may

be asked to focus on being as efficient as possible during technique work or they will be given their specific interval or target times for more aerobic or quality work.

With the sessions detailed, the swimmers use pool water to stick the paper copies to the starting block for reference during the session before getting themselves organised to enter the pool. They collect their 'net-bag' from the store and head for a lane, usually the same lane or with the same people as they always train with. With a lane selected they then begin to unpack the contents of their 'net-bag' (Kickboard, pull-buoy, fins, snorkel, paddles) on to the pool deck ensuring that it is all within easy reach if, or when they need it. Finally, they put on their swimming caps (made from silicone) and googles, and it is time to begin the session, which usually happens on a time set by the coach for example when the clock on scoreboard gets to 6:05.

The swimmers enter the water most often with a dive from the side of the pool, but sometimes with something more amusing like an odd shaped fall, having been pushed, or with a 'bomb'. Their first few strokes or metres after entry are sometimes done at a higher pace than needed as they fight off the effects of the cold water on their skin. Occasionally someone looks back with an exasperated look on their face telling the rest of the group to beware of the colder than normal water. When this happens, it's greeted with moans and groans from the remainder of the squad as they now prepare themselves for a frosty reception.

With everyone in and working their way through the warm-up, it's not uncommon to see swimmers attempt to stretch out tired and stiff muscles as they swim along or switch between elements of the warm-up. There are often comments at this stage about how they are feeling, usually in reference to if they are feeling 'heavy' or 'shite' or 'fucked'. Very rarely does anyone express feeling good at this stage unless asked by one of the coaches where they may respond with a 'fine' or an 'ok', often then telling a team-mate that they don't feel that good in a low voice, so coaches don't hear.

With warm-ups completed what comes next will be dependent on the aim of the session. There might be a power set, or some underwater kick work, or a preparation set that is designed to get the swimmers ready for their respective main set by giving them the opportunity to work towards the pace required in the main set. It may also require the swimmers to get out of the water and put on a racing suit if the main set is a race-pace set. They do this in an attempt to simulate a race scenario and to give the swimmers' the technical advantage that a racing suit provides (e.g. elevated body position or compressed body shape/muscles). They may also have to grab various other pieces of equipment like parachutes or drag socks to provide extra resistance if it's a power set. Before the main set starts each coach organises the groups, moving people if needed to set up head-to-head challenges. The coaches once again run through the content of the set reemphasising what they said earlier and

also adding anything new based on what they have observed during the initial parts of the session. These main sets can be up to and beyond sixty minutes in duration depending on their focus and the swimmers often have to process information from the coaches regarding time, stroke rate or technique during rest intervals between reps, while at the same time trying to recover, possibly take a drink and prepare for the next rep or round.

These sets often place the swimmers in some form of discomfort during their completion, be that heavy laboured breathing, muscle soreness that can lead to cramp, or on occasions feeling nauseous. Some may express their discomfort or their frustrations vocally if they are having a bad set and some will just suffer in silence, trying to swim faster or make things feel easier, often to no avail.

With main sets completed and the swimmers having recomposed themselves a little, they then complete a 'swim down'[12] to try and regain a sense of normality within themselves before jumping out, having completed anywhere from 3000-10000 metres during the session depending on their respective events. As they exit the pool, they thank their respective coaches before grabbing a quick shower, usually as a group, changing, again on poolside, back into their normal clothes and once again heading for the land-conditioning room, this time for some stretching to help alleviate tired and sore muscles. They then depart for home to recover by eating large amounts of food and sleeping, only to return to the pool later that day or the next morning, to repeat the process all over again. Nine times a week, forty-eight weeks of the year, with additional weight training and circuit sessions in between. These are some of Great Britain's best swimmers. A few are among the best in the world.

The above 'ethnographic creative nonfiction' (Smith et al., 2015; Sparkes, 2002) constructed from an amalgamation of fieldnotes and interviews encapsulates the key elements of a typical training session, and has been included to highlight to the reader what typically take places during this specific time and space. The aim of this and subsequent chapters is to deconstruct and explore specific elements of this narrative in more detail, to flesh out some of the key messages into a broader analysis of the competitive swimming lifeworld, highlighting the active role of the embodied agent in the messy and complex reality of the practices involved in 'doing' competitive swimming. As I will show, the analysis reveals how the athletes and the coaches are involved in a daily journey of embodied discovery and experimentation that develops the competitive swimming

[12] 'Swim down' refers to a small block of low intensity swimming and/or social kick at the end of a session to allow swimmers to return to a state of homeostasis.

habitus[13]. I am aware, however, that what happens during each of these training sessions is strongly shaped by the various discourses, practices, and social relations that comprise this lifeworld. All swimming training is done by embodied agents in a swimming pool and it is these practices that are incorporated into the swimmers' body schema, that form the basis of this chapter. These practices and the skills and knowledge that emerge are complex and dynamic. 'Doing' competitive swimming demands constant monitoring and (re)evaluation of skilled movements and techniques. 'Doing' is also situated in an active relationship with a liquid environment, other athletes, and coaches that add a further dynamic to embodied practice and lived through experience. I aim to show how paying attention to the corporeally grounded experiences of doing sport is crucial to understanding the dynamics, and production of the lived sporting body, and therefore contribute to a growing body of literature that addresses the actual lived 'doing of sport' (Allen-Collinson, 2006).

5.1 The Embodied Work of Swimming and Swimming Technique

A key feature to the process of 'doing' competitive swimming is understanding that 'doing' is, as Throsby (2016, p. 28) notes, a "self-orientated project of perpetual improvement-focused embodied labour that is accomplished reflexively and iteratively". Each time these swimmers enter the water, or the gym for that matter, their aim is to improve as an athlete. The competitive swimming body thus has no end point, becoming an embodied project that is continuously worked upon, in a social and cultural context where the body is deemed both malleable through hard work and vigilance, as well as being a social symbol that 'gives off' messages about the self (Shilling, 2012, p. 7). One could therefore postulate that the competitive swimming body is a body that is 'made' via hard work and commitment as opposed to being born, but for the swimmers in this study, it was not seen that way. Participants had a more holistic view of the competitive swimming body as being both 'born' and 'made' through a combination of genetic luck and the undertaking of embodied work.

[13] When using the term habitus, I am referring to the phenomenological concept of habitus, as a "lived through structure in process, constantly evolving as an effect of the interactions of the agent or group with both others and their physical environment" (Crossley, 2004a, p.39) as outlined in section 2.6.1.

A key element to this embodied work is the acclimatisation to a variety of swimming specific body techniques (Mauss, 1979) and reflexive body techniques (Crossley, 2004a, 2004b, 2005b) that characterise the competitive swimming body and give shape to the competitive swimming habitus. There is a specific mode of being, doing and understanding that swimmers have to incorporate and embody reflexively in order to engage effectively and cope with the physical and mental demands of the sport, as well as belonging to the wider community of competitive swimming. These 'techniques of the body' acquired as Shilling (2010, p. 158) notes, "through a process of apprenticeship in culturally specific contexts", a form of body pedagogics, and are essential to the production of the competitive swimming body, and lifeworld.

To become a competitive swimmer requires the ability not only to swim but to swim effectively, and ultimately quickly over a set distance using one of four recognised competitive swimming strokes, or all of them together if competing in individual medley (IM) events. But while there may be a minimum standard below which competitive swimming becomes untenable (i.e. squad selection times in this particular setting), conversely competitive swimming has no end point, as the swimmers undertake metre after metre of 'mindful swimming' in order to embody swimming habits that enhance their fitness, efficiency and as a result their speed. This process of mindful swimming, an experience that is reflective of the phenomenological focus on the mind-body linkage and also draws on the use of the kinaesthetic and proprioceptive senses (see Chapter 6 for more on the swimming sensorium) to highlight how movement is experienced, is encapsulated by Stephen, who alludes to how even though these athletes already have a high level of technical skill they are still actively engaged in 'doing':

> …for me personally, I'm very aware of what's going on in my body when I swim. Erm, very aware of where my body is, it's like you can swim with your hips really low so I'll, when we did that set the other week I'm fully tense so that I'm keeping my hips high in alignment so they're not causing extra drag, like, that's my thought the whole time, just staying in a good strong position (Stephen Interview, 17th October 2017).

Stephen, one of the best at his event in Great Britain, is referring here to actively having to engage his core muscles to keep his hips high in the water during a challenging main set, to ensure he remained as efficient as possible and therefore as fast as possible. In a follow-up

session with Stephen, I also asked him to elaborate on a point he had made regarding 'swimming slow' and purposively thinking about technique. His response again highlights the active nature of 'doing':

> On a good day I will be engaged in every single stroke. I'll be thinking[14] about where my hand goes in, what my catch is like, what position my elbow is in, where my hips are. I am always switched on and thinking about what I'm doing in this situation. There is always something to focus on in more detail (Stephen Follow-Up Discussion, 15th February 2018).

Stephen's active engagement in his bodily actions in the water was not just specific to him. Several others, including Natasha, Charles and Scott all specifically identified the need to stay actively involved in what they were doing in order to keep their stroke technique, efficiency and therefore speed at optimal levels. This active engagement seemingly gives way to a form of 'dys-appearance' (Leder, 1990) or 'eu-appearance' (Zeiler, 2010) as the active process of engaging with technique disrupts the everyday sub-conscious flow of the body bringing certain parts of the body directly into consciousness. Elements of this could be discomforting, as Scott recalled in his interview, stating how having adjusted his freestyle technique earlier in the season resulted in him "using muscles that I hadn't been using before, and so I got really bad aches and stuff in my shoulders" (Scott Interview, October 31st 2017). Scott's shoulders have come to occupy the 'to' in the 'from-to' structure, where his attention is firmly directed towards his shoulders as opposed to outward toward the world (Leder, 1990, p. 74: see section 2.5.4 for more detail), until his new technique becomes incorporated into his body-schema and his shoulders recede into the background once again. However, sometimes this active engagement results in positive outcomes where the body feels good, efficient and fast:

> You just feel like, streamlined and there is almost like no drag on you, you just like, you can just pull and just, feels like you can just keep on going, like, I think the only way you can say it is just feeling smooth like. It just feels effortless, like swimming along is just like nothing holding you back (Charles Interview, 26th October 2017).

> When everything is good you feel like you are on top of the water, if you know what I mean. When, when your technique is there you feel like you feel powerful, like you…feel like you're not pulling yourself through the water,

[14] This may relate to thinking and feeling, especially while swimming at slow speeds where technical work is usually done. While swimming fast however, this may not be the case and some participants even mentioned that to think about technique during racing would be counterproductive.

> you're just like, over the water if you know what I mean (Wade Interview, 1st November 2018).

As the swimmers recalled these experiences, I couldn't help but reflect on how I too had experienced this feeling of lightness or flying during my own swimming experiences. I distinctly remembered when I swam best times or completed my best training sessions it was often accompanied by feelings of ease or skimming across the surface of the water. These sensations were, however, very different to the experiences I had upon returning to the water to complete the self-elicited reflection as detailed in section 3.4.1 (McNarry et al., 2019). During this swim I felt sluggish, weak, and heavy, and I was extremely aware of what was happening as I focused on a plethora of strange swimming sensations.

Conversely, other swimmers alluded to times when they 'switched off', usually during recovery sessions, disengaging the mind from 'doing' and paying little attention to their body, in order to escape the pressures of competitive swimming and simply be present in the aquatic environment. As Mary-Jane and Jessica show in the following extract:

> ***Mary-Jane:*** I think, well there is [sic] two things. Firstly, erm, swimming training does put a lot of pressure on the body and mind and so it's difficult to stay 100% engaged for 12 sessions including gym a week. Erm, that's one reason why I don't think you can, but also because in a race pace session you train to get better. In a speed session like there's that focus of I don't know like front end speed[15], in a recovery session, well sometimes the point of a recovery session is just to not think, so entering that, if you know it's a recovery session, you're not going to be as focused. Like going into it you might not have a coffee before the session, you might, I don't know, you might have a bag of crisps if you want a bag of crisps compared to like before a race pace session when your aim is to hit that, I don't know, that split for four reps or, it's differ[ent], like your mentality is different going into a set regarding what it is, if you know what I mean.
> ***GMC:*** Yeah, I get you
> ***Mary-Jane***: Like a recovery session, it's ok to switch off. It's ok to not concentrate, or to not care, or to have loads of rest, or talk, you know what I mean.
> ***GMC:*** Yeah, actually somewhere down here, I can't remember where it is, but I've actually written swimming as a release, it's kind of like a therapy, or a chance to unwind, is that what those type of sessions really are in terms of a release from the day to day, or the pressures of swimming

[15] Front End Speed refers to the pace that the swimmers would like to hit during the first part of their races. For example, it might be the pace they would like to swim for the 1st 50m or 1st 100m of a 200m event

> ***Jessica:*** I kind of think they are written [by the coaches] to not really think about as well. So, say if you are going for a run, you go for a hard sprint or something, or you choose to go for a nice stroll around a park or something, you're not really thinking when you are strolling but when you are running at a pace you're really focused on getting better and fitter. Whereas when you're walking you almost feel a pleasure almost. It's kinda the same (Group Interview One, 9th July 2018).

Charles also alludes to this escapism stating during his interview how:

> I think well, there is certain sessions where I do just prefer to do it on my own, especially when we do like a recovery [session], like, I don't know a 4k straight. Like, I'd rather just like get in on my own and like put a snorkel on and just like keep my head down and just keep swimming, because it's quite relaxing when you do it like that. You can just like almost let your mind wander a bit and just, just, just feel good and just swim (Charles Interview, 26th October 2017).

This idea of 'letting go' and 'just swimming' firmly places the body in what Leder (1990) refers to as a 'dis-appearing' mode of being-in-the-world. The swimmer's attention is drawn away from their own body and out towards the world that they are interacting or engaged with. As a result, their awareness of their body recedes into the background, evading explicit exploration. Such corporeal 'absence' in which the swimmers focus is *from* the body *to* the objects of experience, allows the swimmers to daydream and enjoy just being in their aquatic environment. Such a position is, however, only possible when mind and body act harmoniously with the environment or situation in which people are engaged. Such a position further highlights the mind-body-world nexus as well as adding weight to Merleau-Ponty's concept of the 'incorporation' of skills and habits into one's body schema i.e. the sensory bodily actions of swimming have become part of the swimmers own highly technical pre-reflexive bodily know how.

However, despite this high level of technical proficiency, the swimmers reported active engagement with technique also alludes to a temporality of these skills. Technique and the learning or refinement of technique thus takes on a fluid, ephemeral and unfinished nature, where there is no fixed end point. This fluid and evolving nature of 'doing' additionally makes highlighting the point at which technical efficiency is achieved much harder to pin down. The goal for these highly skilled athletes thus becomes less about learning new skills

or techniques and more about constantly refining their current skillset in the daily pursuit of an often unattainable ideal, as the swimmers in the following extract highlight:

> ***GMC***: So, every day you are trying to be better?
> ***Group***: [all] Yeah/Yes
> ***GMC***: Ok, so with that constant tweaking and that searching for an ideal, how do you know…what the ideal is?
> ***Matthew***: It's the process of getting towards the goal that you had initially set out and the ideal is thee, perfect limit point of that process, like you're never going to have the process perfect, to get to where you need, but you're trying to always strive for the best process and the best process is the ideal.
> ***GMC***: Ok,
> ***Hope***: Like as close as you can get to the ideal
> ***Matthew***: Yep. I don't think the ideal is really attainable, but
> ***Bruce***: I don't think there is erm a perfect model at all.
> ***GMC***: Ok
> ***Bruce***: I don't think that there's, for example, even the world record holder in your event is the perfect model. I don't think that, I think even if you ask Michael Phelps like do you think everything was perfect, he would be the first person to say no, there is so much more you can do. So, I think it's about finding the process that works for you and basically then becoming the best version of yourself, as an athlete…
> ***Logan***: And whether there, when there isn't necessarily a perfect role model there are certainly fundamentals that I think can be aimed towards, like, it's known if you breathe on a 50 free that's going to slow you down so that's one thing you can work on, your hypoxic. Or it's known, you know pretty much what is, what body position, or what streamline position you need to be off the wall, whereas, yeah I think focusing on those as opposed to picking a person and being like, "I wanna swim like that person", so you're taking bits from different people and finding what works for you.
> ***GMC***: So again, its building that self-model that works for your physical abilities and capabilities and finding what is, as Matthew said, an ideal fit for you as an individual. Is that fair enough?
> ***Group***: Yeah/Yep (Group Interview Two, 10th July 2018).

This process of 'seeking the ideal' therefore involves the constant development of technique through repetitive action over the course of a swimmer's career. Changing or developing technique is, however, a difficult and challenging process in which the swimmers must challenge their own proprioceptive memory and habits. Changing technique therefore becomes a highly conscious and active process through which bodily memories are changed over time and through the social working and reworking of bodies (Spencer, 2009b). The swimmers and coaches work together on this technical development, where the coach and other swimmers cast their gaze over the swimmers,

scrutinising their technique, and offering suggestions on how to increase their level of technical swimming performance. For example, a hand that overreaches on backstroke entry may well feel like it is in the right place to the swimmer but is actually behind the head rather than in line with the shoulder. To change this, the swimmers would utilise video recordings to see what was happening and give them the opportunity subsequently to redeploy their embodied knowledge in a different way. As Crossley (2007, p. 89) argues "agents can learn to find parts of their body and mobilize them in new ways". Technique correction therefore often returns the swimmers to a state of watchfulness, where intentionality and action are directed to specific body parts and feelings. In the above example of correcting over-reaching, it often left the swimmers with the sensation that their arm was entering at ninety degrees to their shoulder when they had only moved it a few centimetres from behind the head to in line with the shoulder (Example drawn from Fieldnotes, October 2017; Scott Interview, 31st October2017; Wade Interview, 1st November 2017). This example highlights how the process of change often results in an alien or disjointed feeling of 'throwness' (Heidegger, 1962), a further bodily dys-appearance also emphasised by Wade and Charles:

> ***Wade:*** When you first do it, it makes you're stroke just feel weird, but then obviously if you keep doing it and keep doing it, you get used to it. But, the first initial change, it, it throws you a bit, like your like, 'ok my stroke feels a bit weird now' but then you get back used to it again (Wade Interview, 1st November 2017).

> ***GMC***: So, when you make that change is it, does it feel worse before it feels better, or does it feel better straight away, or does it depend?
> ***Charles***: I think like some, sometimes it feels better straight away but more often than not it does feel like, it's, it's just like a change like it's like sometimes it does feel better but, like for me it does feel, I wouldn't say worse, it just feels different. It does take like a bit of getting used to (Charles Interview, 26th October 2017).

I asked Charles to expand on what he meant by 'feeling different' and he gave the following example:

> So last week I filmed my breaststroke pull and my left arm was bending before the right. So, I worked on more of a scull[16] and it felt different cos I was using muscles that hadn't been used in that way before. My left forearm felt like it

[16] A scull in swimming refers to maintain pressure on the water with the hands. It is often used as a way to develop a swimmers' feel for and hold of the water.

> was burning cos it was actually getting used. I was however thinking is this actually making me better cos this is uncomfortable but then when we refilmed it, it did look much better so I'm continuing to work on it. You have to try new stuff and accept that things might work, or they might not, but you just have to try and see what happens and be open to that (Charles Follow-up Discussion, 8th February 2018).

This process of refinement is also far from being linear and often results in repetitive steps backwards and forwards, again and again, as Peter illustrates:

> Doing technique is probably the most awkward thing that you can do in swimming, because when you swim for so long, you get into a routine of what normal is. So, you get into the rhythm, you know how everything works, and then all of a sudden someone tells you you're doing it wrong, or, 'change this,' so, yeah, it's like a kink in the big thing. So, it completely shakes off your feel. It's very much a psychological game, as well, because changing a thing technically is easy, but believing that what you're changing is actually beneficial is the big barrier that you need to overcome. Also, to have the psychological willpower to carry on, because technique doesn't change overnight, and adapting to a technical change typically takes you back one step. The hope is that you go two steps forward, but a lot of the problem is that when you go back that one step, people stop, and they go back to old ways because it doesn't feel right or…you feel disjointed. When you swim, you know how your body's going to work. Like, when you've got that regular routine…everything's in sync, and then when you adjust this, it's not just adjusting, let's say, your catch, that catch doesn't just affect your arms, it affects your legs and your timing, and your breathing, so it's sort of like a domino effect. So, yeah, your body just feels awkward, and it's because of that awkwardness that you often revert back to your old technique (Peter Interview, 23rd October 2017).

Peter's quote once again highlights the linkage between mind and body in the 'doing' of swimming. He emphasises how when making technical adjustments the swimmers must be 'in-tune' with the movements of their body and must continue to focus on the new technique for an extended period of time in order for adjustments to their habit-body to be made. Somatic attunement (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2014) and listening to their bodies thus became important embodied processes for these athletes as they negotiate, changes in technique but also different types of training, and periods of the season. This listening results in a greater understanding of their embodied capabilities, which as we have established are not permanent but can be 'lost' during times out of the water at the end of a season or as a result of injury, where levels of physical conditioning can diminish,

or a 'feel for the water' is lost and hands would feel like they are slipping or spinning. These instances resulted in the swimmers feeling like they had forgotten how to swim, leaving the swimmers with a feeling of having lost their swimming bodily hexis, returning them to a state of bodily incomprehension and a body that did not feel like theirs or do what they felt it should and could do:

> Swimming's one of those things that you lose, unfortunately. So, I have two days out of the water, and I lose all feel and catch. It's one of those sports that's it's gone as quick as [pause]. So, if you're out a day, you will feel the consequences of being out a day, which is why we have such a vigorous schedule (Peter Interview, 23rd October 2017).

What's more, Peter's and other swimmers accounts also draw attention to the habitual nature of 'doing'. Although the swimmers often referred to technique as a habit, the highlighted fluid and evolving nature of 'doing' adds illustrative weight to Merleau-Ponty's (2002) concept of habit, not as a fixed, mechanical response to stimuli, but as a general and flexible power of responding to situations. Habit therefore is a form of embodied and practical understanding, or know-how, that is grasped and incorporated into one's bodily schema as a tacit and practical principle of action (Crossley, 2001c); a form of bodily knowledge resulting from physical sensations and increased bodily awareness (Lawrence, 2012). This flexibility of habit is highlighted by how in practice the swimmers engage with a variety of drills or periods of trial and error that are designed to give them the opportunity to direct their intentionality to a specific element of their technique or body part that needs scrutiny, with a view that, over time, this leads to the effective performance of refined skilled movement. As this new movement pattern becomes habituated, the swimmers no longer have to focus their intentionality on this new component of their technique; it has been incorporated into their body schema and as a result often recedes into background awareness, allowing them to shift their attention to other technical or tactical elements. This point is emphasised by Clint who in reference to changing his technique indicated how this may initially make him slower as he had to think about the change but:

> when it starts to become in-built again, you don't actually have to think about it and you can start going quicker because you can focus on the rest of the stuff that you're doing, [for example], the pace that you're [swimming] at (Clint Interview, 26th October 2017).

This complex fluid dynamic of 'doing' helps illuminate how skilful action is developed.

Furthermore, the spatial dimension is important in 'doing' swimming and changing technique for as Moya (2014, p. 1) notes, with reference to Merleau-Ponty (2002), "the lived human body relates to space that is also lived". Habit thus presupposes a form of understanding that the body has in terms of operating within a certain world, establishing an operant or operative intentionality (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. xx) which refers to the pre-reflective and corporeal link that a subject, in this case a swimmer, has with the world. The corporeal subject (swimmer) inhabits a world (water) that provokes certain questions that need resolving. The body therefore must adapt in order to solve these questions. In the case of these swimmers that question often relates to how to move through water faster. As Gallagher and Zahavi (2008, p. 138) note, "the environment therefore calls forth a specific body-style so that the body works with the environment and is included in it. The posture the body adopts in a situation is its way of responding to the environment." Similarly, Ingold (2000, p. 230) notes how "our knowledge of the environment undergoes continuous formation in the very course of our moving in it". The body therefore must anticipate and react to a constantly changing environment, which is perhaps made even more pertinent by the fluidity and viscosity of water that breaks down the body's normal boundaries as it flows around the swimmers. Matthew eloquently sums up this constant fluid, evolving, dynamic interaction between the swimming body-mind and environment:

> I like the fact that we are in water and that there is nothing stable about water. It's always moving, and it's the same with how you feel and how you approach every day. You have to just constantly keep changing the way you approach things (Group Interview Two, 10th July 2018).

Habit therefore bears a direct relation to the dialogue between subject and environment. Competitive swimming thus becomes about embracing an embodied feel in addition to objective knowledge; one cannot become a competitive swimmer simply by reading about it, one must actively engage with the aquatic world in order to 'do' swimming. As Ingold (2000) points out, the skill of doing is grounded in the "attentive perceptual involvement" with one's environment:

> …foundations of skill lie in the irreducible condition of the practitioner's embeddedness in an environment…[where] through repeated practical trials, and guided by observations [of accomplished practitioners], he [sic] gradually gets the 'feel' of things for himself - that is, he learns to fine-tune his own movements so as to achieve the rhythmic fluency of the accomplished practitioner (Ingold, 2000, p. 353).

5.2 The Use and Incorporation of Swimming Training Equipment

The ability to swim, as noted above, is the most obvious of the body techniques associated with competitive swimming, hence why it has been focused on in-depth in this chapter in terms of 'doing'. However, contained within this 'doing' there are a host of drills and skills and a variety of pieces of equipment, for example fins, paddles, pull-buoy, kickboard, snorkel, parachute, socks, cups, and tennis balls that the swimmers also have to become proficient with using, and some of which are employed as 'body auxiliaries' in Merleau-Ponty's (2002) terms (see also Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2011). Each of these pieces of equipment will be designed to either work on a specific area of the body or element of a stroke. On the one hand, some pieces of equipment were afforded a greater favour than others, for example fins and/or paddles that provide an assistive element, as Mary-Jane portrays, ranked highly under favourite pieces of equipment:

> …[when] using paddles it's easier to activate your lats [latissimus dorsi muscles] and get your shoulders going. Erm, which obviously helps my feel for the water, and I rely a lot on that. And then with my fins, it's kind of like the same but lower body cos, erm, breaststroke arms and fly kick, is really good to get your hips up, get your [stroke] rate up. So, kind of, for prep, in terms of prep going into either a race or hard set, erm, I do that, I like to mix up the fins and paddles because erm, yeah, to just like you know feel good, feel fast and get my body ready (Mary-Jane Interview, 3rd November 2017).

This advantageous, assistive element of using fins and paddles was echoed by several other swimmers including Natasha and Gwen who also noted using paddles and fins to help regain or improve their catch or body position. A process that was observable from my position on poolside as the following fieldnote attests to:

> As the hands enter the water the paddle causes them to search for that sweet spot. You can see the paddle reject positions if the hand is in the wrong place. It wobbles side to side until it is placed in the right position. Once they find this position however the swimmers are able to replicate it each stroke (Fieldnote, 29th Jan 2018 AM).

On the other hand, items such as the parachute that disrupted the swimmer's bodily schema ranked amongst the least favourite.

Additionally, while using equipment it was interesting to see how quickly each piece became incorporated into and normalised within the swimmer's bodily schema. As they

swam paddles and fins seemingly became body auxiliaries, an extension of hands and feet respectively, much in the way the blind man's [sic] stick forms an extension of the bodily synthesis to Merleau-Ponty (2002), or as Ford and Brown (2006, p. 151) note in regard to surfing where during the riding of a wave the separation of "body from board seems to vanish with the board appearing more as an appendage to the moving body". The interesting point however, that adds weight to the incorporation of these pieces of equipment into the swimmer's bodily schema actually lies in how on removing these items, hands and feet subsequently felt smaller, or like they were slipping through the water, as Logan and Gwen comment respectively:

> ***GMC***: What's it like if you've had fins on for a while and take them off?
> ***Logan***: Oh, yeah, that is a weird feeling actually, same with paddles just, don't know, it feels like you're slipping in the water a bit. It doesn't last that long that feeling but it is definitely a weird feeling, not a nice feeling (Logan Interview, 27th October 2017).

> ***GMC***: When you take the paddles off, how does that [feel]?
> ***Gwen***: Your hands feel like tiny, so like, you just feel like you're not getting any water. You feel like you a literally just slipping through the water. So that's not great when you go from paddles to no paddles, that's not a great feeling…when I take them off straight away my hands are all over the place cos I've gone from having a big surface area, with lots of water, to like these tiny little bony hands (Gwen Interview, 24th October 2017).

It should, however, be noted that although the swimmers may have ranked the parachute as one of their least favourite pieces of equipment whilst actually wearing it, upon taking it off and no longer experiencing its resistive force, they reported experiencing intensely pleasurable feelings of speed, and lightness within the water; all sensations of a positive 'heightened sense of corporeal aliveness' (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015) or 'corporeal freedom'. As the swimmers described this to me, I couldn't help but think of how this compared to when I was swimming and my coaches made me wear a t-shirt or leggings as resistance, and how upon removing these items the touch of the water upon my skin would feel different: colder or silkier, and I would feel lighter, and faster. This incorporation of various pieces of equipment into the body schema thus altered the experiential ground of swimming, and upon removing said equipment the swimmers where able to gain a new appreciation of what certain swimming experiences felt like.

5.3 The Language of Competitive Swimming

'Doing' competitive swimming and completing the countless hours of training, however, is not just a case of undertaking these various body techniques in a planned structure where different elements are pieced together to bring about a desired training effect. Mastery of these individual elements is not enough. The competitive swimming lifeworld also has a language of its own, where terms or acronyms such as 'freestyle', 'red', '∆100', or 'B/E7' have a specific meaning that the swimmer must embody (see appendix 7 for further examples and explanations of these terms). The swimmers must develop a 'feel' for this language that enables them to understand, respond to, and execute the various techniques in order for the session to function effectively. As Crossley (2004a) has perceptively noted in relation to circuit class attendees, participation presupposes 'fluency' in this language. For example, for the various colours, such as 'red' or 'white' that the coaches at ANP Swimming use to designate different swimming intensities to achieve their desired effect, the swimmers must firstly recognise that said specific colour is next in the training plan and be able to adjust their speed to ensure said colour is achieved. The words 'red' or 'white' therefore take on a more significant meaning, which is '*this next rep(s), or part of a rep, is to be swum at a red intensity which correlates to an anaerobic threshold heartrate of around 170 beats per minute. You need to adjust your swimming pace to ensure that this heart-rate is achieved*'. In order for this to happen and the session to continue as planned, each swimmer must be versed in this language and understand what their target time is, what this pace or intensity feels like, and be able to shift to this pace instantly as well as being tuned-in to what is going on around them. This requires a level of bodily know-how rather than merely a conceptual knowledge-that (Crossley, 2004a), and exemplifies the centrality of the mind-body linkage. To know somatically what these elements are is to be able to do them. Thus, there is a powerful link between words and bodily action just as the following fieldnote emphasises:

> One thing I did make a note of this evening is how the swimmers translate what the coach writes on the session into bodily action. They have to have an understanding of what the written words mean in an embodied action. The same with when the coach gives them feedback, they have to be able to translate the coach's words into bodily action and all within an aquatic world (Fieldnote, 12th July 2018 PM).

The experience of new members to the squad also indicates how this language is a learnt skill. Newcomers, not versed in each coach's specific short-hand terminology often struggle to comprehend to what the colours, or acronyms refer, as the following extract from one of the group interviews shows:

> ***GMC***: So, to inhabit this world you have to understand [what things like] 3x400 at red pace actually mean. I know that may not be a good example, but it is an example.
> ***Scott***: Well I didn't have a clue, cos it's my first year obviously, so I didn't have the colour system and even before that in my old club we had different terms. We used to always base everything off pb+ so like it makes it, so now the colours I feel like it's a better interpretation, like now I've learnt it, it's better.
> ***Wade***: Like everything relates though don't it, do you know what I mean
> ***Eddie***: That's why Nick does the colours. That's the biggest thing, I think when all the freshers come in, you see like he will say Red, like threshold and some people are sitting there chilling doing like, what I would call A2 which is easier than threshold and then some people are absolutely smashing it so, it just takes a while to adapt to what a coach actually wants by what he says (Group Interview three, 16th July 2018).

This inability to execute training repetitions at the correct intensity also adds weight to the notion that the habitus of the swimmer is both structured and structuring (Crossley, 2004a). The newcomer has not yet incorporated a 'feel' for this specific lifeworld. Their ANP Swimming habitus is in this respect a work in progress. Although they are experienced swimmers with significant amounts of embodied swimming knowledge, they are still unfamiliar with the socio-cultural nuances, including the language of ANP Swimming. As time progresses, however, these newcomers come to learn the language, often with help from other swimmers, developing a feel for these elements. This 'feel' is vital to the swimmers' continued involvement in this lifeworld, because the smooth running of, and the swimmers continued participation in the various sessions, as well as their continued improvement, all depend upon it. The swimmers learn to embody the coach's terminology and thus begin to understand how to inhabit the ANP Swimming lifeworld and the competitive swimming lifeworld more generally. They then begin to play an active role in the reproduction of competitive swimming as a social practice. However, this 'feel' can often be thrown off, due to what Crossley (2004a) notes is a 'lived temporality of action'. Should the coach introduce new terminology, suddenly everyone once again becomes somewhat of a newcomer, as occurred when Nick began to embrace a new training

modality that utilises different concepts, ideas, and terminology for how training sets are designed. In doing this, everyone's habitus, including my own was challenged, temporarily fractured, and thrown-into disarray, highlighting that however embedded and embodied skills may become, they are not necessarily learnt once-and-for-all (Allen-Collinson, 2016).

Additionally, and as with technique, despite the language relating to specific embodied modes of being, the ability of the swimmer to execute these as desired is very temporally specific, again highlighting the fluid and evolving daily nature of 'doing'. Logan alludes to this in the following extract about how his white pace (a base level aerobic training pace) differs from a morning session to an evening one:

> Like for me yesterday, my white pace changed by about four or five seconds between the morning and the afternoon just because of how I was feeling. Like we'd had the long weekend off and I was feeling awful in the morning and I felt better in the evening, and that's how much it changed by (Group interview two, 10th July 2018).

This unpredictability of how the swimmers are going to feel each day subsequently becomes one of the most challenging aspects of the sport, and as Bruce says:

> I think that's why a lot of people, would struggle in this environment. Like one day you feel good, like Logan said, wake up in the morning feel shit, go training again feel better. Train tonight feel shit. Go tomorrow, feel shit, go back the next day feel good and it's like, it's so up and so down that it's, it's a lot to take a lot of the time and you've got to find a way that you can sort of zone out from it a bit (Group interview two, 10th July 2018).

Despite the prevalence of this rollercoaster of feelings, this phenomenon of unpredictability was not always appreciated by the coaches in their planning, who, despite having both been swimmers themselves, often had an expected level of how the swimmers 'should' be feeling that didn't match up to how the swimmers actually did feel. Using Logan's example of long weekends off, the coaches would expect the swimmers to arrive back for Monday morning training refreshed and ready to go. However, the swimmers on occasion felt sluggish and unable to complete the workouts as designed. Despite this disparity, however, the coaches would, where possible, adjust the workouts or give those struggling the option of swimming easier until they began to feel better; but at other times they just pushed on through.

5.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to highlight to the reader some of the body and reflexive body techniques that play a key part in the swimmer's ability to inhabit the competitive swimming lifeworld, and how the acquisition of these techniques and skilled behaviours is not simply achieved through the repetitive rehearsal of coherent movements in an activity over time. This process is a much more complex, cyclical phenomenon that demands practical experimentation, discovery and the ability to constantly adjust and adapt depending on the practice (Downey, 2005), as well as linking mind, body and world. As Lea (2009, p. 467) notes, skilled behaviour must "conjugate with the context". The process of skill acquisition and 'doing' thus becomes less about 'prestigious imitation' as Mauss (1979) described this, when individuals imitate the actions of those who have been successful and in whom they have confidence, and more about the fundamentally social nature of such learning as requiring input from others (Shilling, 2007; Throsby, 2016); for example, coaches, other swimmers, or support staff. In this way the body is socialised, in that individuals take patterns of action into their 'flesh', and that flesh is conditioned by the activity. The body and its capabilities are therefore profoundly shaped by the social, cultural, and physical-cultural.

The 'doing' of swimming thus does not occur in a socio-cultural vacuum, it is socially shaped, and offers insight into the dynamic and dialectical nature of embodied action as well as the centrality and malleability of our embodied being in the world. Our embodiment thus offers us a unique reference point from which to experience the world, as well as simultaneously being shaped on an ongoing basis by time, space and our relation to others. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is a useful resource in analysing this dynamic as he acknowledges not only the centrality of the body to our experiencing of the world, but also the capacity for humans to expand their body schemas through the learning of new, or the development of older skills, sometimes involving the use of body auxiliaries. Our bodies to Merleau-Ponty are the unique point from which we engage with the world. From this standpoint one's own body, or *le corps propre,* anchors the swimmers in, and allows them to engage with the world around them; "we are our bodies" and they are our very way of 'being-in-the-world' (Dasein). In emphasizing the centrality of the body Merleau-Ponty (1968), in his later work, recast the notion of being-in-the-world as flesh-of-the-world, or

'*chair'*, to better convey what (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2014, p. 549) term our "corpo-reality". It is this 'corpo-reality' that allows the swimmers to engage with the different practices of their aquatic environment in order to bring about, through intelligent practice (Marchand, 2010), both reflective and pre-reflective skilled 'doing'. As a result, the swimmers develop a tacit, embodied knowledge, or know-how that forms their aquatic corporeal schema. The swimming body is thus a lived body or *Leib*, that is conscious, active, reflexive, and linked to the world as part of a single mind-body-world system. It should be cautioned, however, that skill and habit are not permanent and as well as offering the capacity to being developed they can also degenerate. This highlights how the competitive swimming lifeworld is a dynamic, fluid, and lived-through structure in-process, that constantly '(de-)evolves' as an effect of the interactions, or lack of interactions that an agent has with others, and their physical aquatic environment. As such my findings resonate with those from within other sport and physical cultures, for example, circuit training (Crossley, 2004a), surfing (Ford & Brown, 2006), and open water marathon swimming (Throsby, 2016).

Being able to 'do' swimming and work towards developing the competitive swimming habitus thus resides in the embodied capacity of each swimmer, through continued interaction with their aquatic lifeworld, to incorporate information into their body schema with a view to maintaining or increasing the standard of their skilled action. As has been highlighted above, this process does not occur in a 'motor programming information processing' style but is lived and developed through an interaction of mind-body and environment. Learning and doing are therefore not unidirectional processes but involve a cyclical process where a swimmer's body becomes the focus of their intentionality, again and again as new skills or adjustments are developed. This constant ebbing and flowing of states draws attention to how knowing skill is inherently open-ended, with no finite point of proficiency (Shilling, 2017). Swimmers can always seek to change something within their own corporeal limits, with the intention of becoming faster or more efficient. To understand 'doing' as part of a lived interaction between body and world, one also needs to understand the sensory transformations and information that facilitate and arise from such 'doing'. It is these sensory elements on which the following chapter focuses in detailing the 'shifted sensorium' (Potter, 2008) of competitive swimming.

Chapter 6: The Shifted Sensorium of Competitive Swimming

Patterns of activity, habits, and movements like those discussed in the previous chapter are important in understanding experiences of embodiment, and the swimming lifeworld. Bodily education does not only involve training the body's capacity for action but is inherently underpinned by sensory presentations to our consciousness that are meaningful, not only because of what they call to mind or how an actor organises them, but also because of how that person can act upon, and within the lived world. Our bodies are the fleshy instruments of comprehension, and together with sensory perception, they mediate our relationship with the world (Crossley, 2001c; Merleau-Ponty, 2002). A world in which social actors undertake both sensory-production as well as sensory-interpretation (Chau, 2008). We thus find ourselves caught in a continuous stream of sensations, and as Leder (1990, p. 18) writes, "the sensory world thus involves a constant reference to our possibilities of active response". Such possibilities are what Gibson (1979/1986) refers to as *affordances* (opportunities for action). This chapter focuses on the data that reveal some of the key elements of the sensory world of competitive swimming as part of what has been termed 'a shifted sensorium' to borrow Potter's (2008, p. 446) terminology. Before beginning I would again like to emphasize the difficulties and challenges faced in collecting and representing sensory experiences that are not usually translated into verbal or visual format (see Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015; Merchant, 2011; Sparkes & Smith, 2012). These experiences are deemed the "unrepresentable" by Merchant (2011) or "difficult to represent" by Allen-Collinson and Leledaki (2015), and even at times to be "without – or beyond – language" (Allen-Collinson, 2011b) and thus proved particularly challenging to elicit from the swimmers, especially when asking them to describe more visceral or internally felt sensations. To combat this and portray these experiences as evocatively as possible I have therefore used a combination of the swimmers' own words, along with some of my own embodied swimming knowledge and understanding of the swimming lifeworld, in the hope of developing a sensory-intersubjectivity (Allen-Collinson et al., 2018c) with the reader, in which the presented text resonates with their own lived experience if not of swimming directly, then of similar sensory experiences.

I begin this task by exploring the haptic dimension of competitive swimming focusing on the active and reciprocal nature of touch as the swimmers both touch and are touched by the water. This then opens the discussion up to include temperature as an active form of touch as well as an internally experienced sensation. The somatic senses of proprioception and kinaesthesia are then examined via the swimmers feel for the water. The role of vision in competitive swimming is then discussed before finally addressing the sensation of inner time or durée.

6.1 The Haptic Dimension of Competitive Swimming

Derived from the Greek *haptesthai* meaning 'pertaining to touch' (Merriam Webster, 2019), the kind of touch implied by the term 'haptic' often extends beyond skin contact, i.e. cutaneous touch, to include internally felt sensations (Paterson, 2007). Haptic experience to Paterson (2009) involves a combination of the tactile and the felt senses of locomotion including proprioception (felt muscular position), kinaesthesia (sense of movement) and the vestibular system (sense of balance); what Paterson (2009) refers to as 'somatic sensations'.

Haptic experience in sport and physical cultures involves an active form of touch between those touching and that which they touch, as well as the felt senses of locomotion, to provide information about the field of play, equipment and our own bodies. In doing so sportspeople are able to 'tune-in' (Ingold, 2004) to the constantly changing and evolving sport environments in which they engage. The body-senses-environment nexus is also fluid, mobile, and continually changing, especially in a water-based sport like swimming. In such a lifeworld Merleau-Ponty's (2002) notion of reversibility is particularly apposite as the swimmers are immersed in and surrounded by water. Swimmers are thus touched by the water touching their skin, but also actively touch the water as they use their hands and feet to 'feel', 'grip', and 'hold' on to the water in order to facilitate locomotion. Swimmers thus build a two-way, embodied relationship with the water which, as Mary-Jane notes in the following extract, brings about feelings of 'intense embodiment' (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015), affecting the swimmers at the cutaneous level, as well as providing heightened internally felt sensations:

> ***Mary-Jane***: When you dive in, as in like, physically you feel like the water on your skin, like if you've got, I don't know, it sounds probably quite funny like wrong, but if I had the smallest cut, the water makes you sense it, like feel it, if your quads are tight kicking, you will be able to feel it, whereas on land you might not. If you've got a headache…with a hat on, with goggles on, with a costume on your body is quite compressed, so in regard to headaches and stuff I feel them more (Mary-Jane Interview, 3rd November 2017).

The sensations of the cutaneous touch of the water and resultant feelings of corporeal aliveness (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015) are especially pertinent when the swimmers enter the pool at the beginning of a session. Going from the warm, humid environment of the poolside, into the usually stable but tepid temperature of the pool water often drew little reaction from the swimmers due to the mundanity and regularity of this experience (Fieldnotes, October 2017; February 2018; July 2018). However, on days where the temperature fluctuated, even by a single degree, the swimmers were instantly aware of this change, commenting on the pool being either 'roasting' or 'freezing' upon entry to the water. Stephen even mentions how he can 'see' that the water will be cold before he even gets in, especially before a morning session:

> ***Stephen***: So yeah, you've hardly had any sleep. It's back to the pool again. You can barely keep your eyes open. Erm, you've got to do your pre-pool. You're stood there, the waters cold, it's very cold. This is the worst-case scenario, I like training, but you know what I mean. You can see the water is cold.
> ***GMC***: Did you say that you can see the water is cold?
> ***Stephen***: Oh, you know when it's cold. When you, you can tell. You can just, someone will put a hand in, or someone will jump in and it's freezing and it's just, yeah. So, you jump in, everything hurts, you get the chills, goose bumps from the cold (Stephen Interview, 17th October 2017).

Once in the water, these lower than normal temperatures were often accompanied by a few surprised looks back at those still on poolside as a way of signalling to those yet to get in how chilly the water actually was. If the water was especially cold this was often met with some form of expletive like "Jesus Christ that's cold" or "fuck me that's fresh", as well as the first few strokes or metres being completed at a higher speed than normal to try and acclimatise to the lower than normal temperatures (Fieldnotes; October 2017; February 2018). This bodily reaction, and negative experience were commented on by several participants, including Jessica and Logan:

> ***Jessica***: if it's cold you've gotta like sprint the first 2 lengths to warm up, and you don't want to be doing that at 5 o'clock in the morning. You don't even want to be doing that at night. So, when you dive in and it's cold, it's horrible, it's like one of the worst things, but you get used to it pretty quickly. But yeah, I think that's what scares swimmers the most. Not scares, but worries them before getting in, it's cold and I'm gonna [have to] swim fast if it's cold [laughs] (Jessica Interview, 30th October 2017).

> ***Logan***: Training in a cold pool [sighs] what's worse, I'm not sure because training in a cold pool is just… especially for like that moment you dive in it's the worst part about swimming anyway, it's just, oh it's horrible, getting in to a freezing cold pool at 5.30 in the morning is awful (Logan Interview, 27th October 2017).

Another swimmer, Frank, does however indicate that unless this reduced temperature is extreme, the associated bodily state of 'dys-appearance' from the initial shock of getting in is overcome within the first 100 metres or so, returning the body to a state of dis-appearance as the swimmers become acclimatised to their aquatic environment. The swimmers have, as Throsby (2013) notes, assimilated a state of 'oneness' with the water, much like Merleau-Ponty's (1968) notion of the *chiasm*; an intertwining of mind-body-world, swimming bodies are linked to and merge with their aquatic world. They become part of the fabric of that world, the 'flesh-of-the-world' (Merleau-Ponty, 1968) and body-water interconnectedness thus becomes a central structure of swimming experience:

> ***Frank***: I'm a bit apprehensive diving in at first because I'm like, oh no, it's cold. I'm going to wait a bit. I'm going to wait 'til it warms up, 'til everyone's in. But then, you have to get over it and jump in. But then, you sprint the first 20 metres just to warm up and then you start swimming normally again, but by the time you've reached 100 metres, you don't feel it anymore unless it's particularly cold, unless it's freezing (Frank Interview, 18th October 2017).

The warm-up within a swimming training session therefore takes on a significant meaning in terms of helping the swimmers overcome not only the effects of the cutaneous touch of cool water, but also in preparing the swimmers physically, and mentally for the intensity of workout to follow. This is commensurate with Potter's (2008) analysis of contemporary dancers, or Allen-Collinson and Owton's (2015) runners and boxers, where effective corporeal and psychological 'warming up' is crucial in preparing and energizing the body-mind for the imminent physical demands.

If, however, the pool is, as Frank notes, 'freezing', this often leads to a continued state of 'dys-appearance' that negatively affects the swimmer's ability to perform at the level they desire, as Eddie and Natasha note:

> ***Eddie***: So, in Samoa [Commonwealth Youth Games] it was super cold and as soon as I got in all I wanted to think about was getting out. And, you can't be like that when you're training, and I just got goose bumps everywhere, and just trying to swim, you can't get warmed up, your muscles can't get, you always do a warm-up set if you're running or anything like that, but you just physically can't get warm, nothing's working the way it should be. Then you get frustrated with yourself because you're not going the times you're meant to be going. And it's just a cycle of, I feel shit, I want to get out, I feel shit, I want to get out (Eddie Interview, 2nd November 2017).

> ***Natasha***: …but also erm, Manchester actual pool, like underneath they have a pool underground and when you'd swim in that, that would be that cold that sometimes when I was younger, I'd do 200 and I'd have to get out because I'd have blue lips so, definitely a big thing temperature. It can affect your mood.
> ***GMC:*** Yeah
> ***Natasha***: Definitely, if it's too cold, people just can't be bothered. You feel stiff…If it's too cold your muscles get really tight cos, you're so cold your shivering and then you're just being too tense (Natasha Interview, 26th October 2017).

Conversely, if the pool is warm upon entering, this was often met with enjoyable, pleasurable sensations and emotions, a 'eu-appearance' (Zeiler, 2010), as noted by Jessica:

> Yeah, this morning was a lot hotter than it usually is and normally on a Monday morning its worse because you haven't been in the water for, Sunday, you haven't been in the water at all. But I got in this morning and I was like, "aww it's quite nice" [laughs] (Jessica Interview, 30th October 2017).

However, unless the accompanying session to this eu-appearance (Zeiler, 2010) of warmer than usual water is a recovery session, the notion of the warm pool being 'quite nice' quickly disappears as the swimmers start their 'work', with subsequent bodily responses resulting from their increased level of embodied labour causing them to overheat and make 'doing' un-pleasurable, and bringing on subsequent dys-ease (Leder, 1990):

> ***Matthew***: I think it was a pool in Germany and it was just roasting. You just keep going for your water bottle, even if it's indoors and it's roasting which is probably worse because it's muggy as well. You keep going for your water bottle, but you feel like you are continually sweating, and you get that weak feeling. Your energy is sapped, just getting sapped out of you constantly. So

> that's terrible, so you can get that sometimes if you're in very high temperature outdoor pools as well. Like the sun is baking, I've been to Australia, I've swam out there and, on the days it's high 30s, you're like I can't go anywhere, I can't do this. Because, you might, let's say you're in the middle of the set and you've ran out of your last bottle, you've three bottles of water and you've run out of that one. You're peeing constantly, but you're also sweating constantly, you feel like a hot mess in soup. It's just not easy going (Matthew Interview, 23rd October 2017).
>
> ***Jean***: …if it's too hot, I feel too lethargic, just to physically hot, you feel too warm to swim. Erm, you feel sluggish in the water, you don't, you fill like you are slipping the water, you don't feel like you are catching anything, and it just makes, warm water just makes swimming a lot harder. Erm, yeah, it's not nice, it's like being in a bath when you just want to relax but you're actually telling your muscles no, you need to go (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).
>
> ***Natasha***: …we went to a pool that was 30 degrees [laughs], was 30 degrees right and you got in and it was like steaming, it was so hot and like you were swimming along and you felt really heavy and you did 25 and you were out like panting for breath cos it was just so draining…you feel gross, especially if it too hot, like I've not experienced it a ANP Swimming, but if a pool is too hot you feel really groggy and like heavy (Natasha Interview, 26th October 2017).

As each of these examples show, the increased water temperature was not just felt at the cutaneous level but subsequently brought on a heightened sense of heat within the body. Bodily movement generates heat and the normal sensations of inner heat for the swimmers correspond to specific levels of exertion and water temperature. Although normally welcomed, with sensations of inner heat being seen as a sign of effective performance (Fieldnotes; Frank Interview), due to the increase in temperature of the water the swimmers' normal sense of thermoception was thrown into disarray, thus making it more challenging for them to regulate their 'doing' and negatively impacting on their performance. Maintaining homeostasis thus becomes problematic due to warm water negating the water's normal cooling effect. To think of it another way, a runner would be able to add or remove layers of clothing if they are too hot or too cold, making a 'situational adjustment' (Becker, 1977, p. 279). For the swimmers, however, their near naked bodies are enveloped in the water and they then either have to stop swimming, train through it and risk injury/illness, or find other remedial ways of cooling down which often resulted in stepping out the fire door, dousing themselves with water, or jumping under a cold shower (Fieldnotes; October, 2017; February, 2018; July; 2018).

Additionally, as Matthew indicates, the effects of a hot pool also brought on the sensation of sweating; a sensation that swimmers rarely feel due to their immersion in an already liquid environment. Sweating therefore takes on the form of a strange or 'weird' sensation, as Wade comments:

> I just remember this one night it was roasting, like the pool was just so hot and like I felt like I was physically sweating in the pool. It was like, you know when your body just feels like flush. Like you know when you go red on your face, it felt like that but your whole body…It's a strange feeling like you honestly feel, you feel like [pause] yeah, I mean obviously, you probably are sweating but like it felt like there was sweat coming off me. It was probably just the water but it…yeah it just felt like it was sweat. It felt like I'd just done a big session like running or something, yeah it was weird (Wade Interview, 1st November 2017).

Normally, and in contrast to Allen-Collinson et al. (2018c) where sweat was found to be representative of corporeal immersion in the hard-physical labour of their respective physical and sporting cultures, due to the immersion of the swimmer in water they were denied this experience, and therefore denied one avenue of displaying the fruits of their labour. The swimmers therefore used a variety of different markers to quantify their efforts from how tired they felt, to how out of breath they were or in some cases how hot a shower they needed after the session: hard session, with high effort, cold shower to cool down; lower intensity session equals a warmer shower.

Conversely, during the swimmers' weekly circuit class conducted in the poolside land conditioning room, which the swimmers, both male and female, often undertook in nothing more than their swimming costume, sweat was highly evident. The swimmers often had to towel down during breaks in the circuit to remove sweat from their bodies and the mats. For some this sweaty experience was uncomfortable; for example, Clint who referred to it as "*sticky and horrible and uncomfortable*". For others, male and female alike, it was worn as a badge of honour, with some even creating sweat angels on the mats to show how prevalent it was (Fieldnotes, October 2017 and February 2018). Sweat therefore became valorised in this situation but its lack of evidence during water work removed its capabilities of providing a moral dimension (Atkinson, 2017) or respectability (Waitt, 2014) to the swimmers' efforts.

Furthermore, the swimmers also reported that changes in the temperature of the water not only affected how they felt in terms of being hot or cold, and how they performed, but also how it made the water feel. Cold water was often reported as feeling more compact, crisp, or hard, resulting in the swimmers believing they could 'catch' or 'hold' more water, and therefore swim faster or more efficiently. As Matthew and Jean both note:

> ***Matthew***: If a pool is really cold it usually feels really fast. Like the water usually feels crisp and hard, cold water's harder…You feel like you've got a good catch in the water. Well you usually race in colder temperature pools as well…I always seem to feel faster in colder temperature pools and feel like I can push my body more and try harder…I have an analogy for when its colder I feel like the water is turning into boxes and I can pull the boxes, but when it's hot, it's like custard and [I feel like] I'm not really pulling much (Matthew Interview, 23rd October 2017).
>
> ***Jean***: Like the water usually feels crisp and hard, cold water [feels] harder (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017)

A hot pool, however, was described as feeling like, among other things, custard, treacle, or a bit slimy, which resulted in a loss of feel and the sensation of hands slipping through the water, leading to a reduced feeling of catch or hold, and a negative impact upon performance. Much like Lewis (2000, p. 71) who describes how adventure climbers develop a tactile understanding of the rock through their hands where "knowing is made corporeal by the sense of touch replacing that of sight as the primary mode of gathering data", the swimmers develop a feel for the water through their whole body, especially the hands', tactile engagement with it.

From the above examples it is evident that swimming bodies are fundamentally linked to their aquatic world in which the swimmers must engage in "temperature work" (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015) to know, interpret, and make sense of the temperature of the water (thermoception), and regulate their body temperature (thermoregulation). During normal conditions, the swimmers' attentional focus is directed towards the activity in which they are engaged, creating bodily disappearance in regard to the cutaneous touch of temperature. However, in extremes of temperature or temperatures outside of the swimmers' normal *modus operandi* the mind-body experienced 'thrownness' (Heidegger, 1962), bringing about episodes of bodily dys-ease (Leder, 1990). The swimmers' bodies

were thrust back into consciousness as they were not only touched by the extremes of temperature bringing about 'goosebumps' or 'sweating', but internally bodies felt like they were unable to do what they were accustomed to doing due to tight or sluggish muscles, or overheating. Phenomenologically, these examples also highlight how the swimmer's body is engaged in both an outward projection to the world and an interoceptive focus, a fluctuating shifting of intentionality from outwards to inwards (Allen-Collinson et al., 2018c) depending on the temperatures of the water. Hot and cold can thus be defined as context-dependent and are perceived, experienced, and felt 'by' as well as 'within' the swimming body where it touches/merges with its aquatic environment, making temperature much more than just a specific modality of touch. As Potter (2008) notes, thermoception has a trans-boundary capacity that makes it somewhat analogous to the sense of smell. This boundary is often blurred due to the shifting interaction between internally felt and outwardly orientated senses (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015).

For swimmers, this haptic knowledge of temperature is therefore an important element of their embodied experience of the water and their physical activity in the pool. The changes in water temperature and the swimmers' subsequent embodied responses highlight the interplay between bodies and their environments, and how successful outcomes and feelings of success are dependent on such an interaction. As noted above, and as Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007, p. 123) state, "[s]portspeople thus touch, and are in turn touched by the physical properties of terrain and equipment, and so build a two-way, embodied relationship with them". The oscillation between the swimmer touching and being touched by the water, is encapsulated in Merleau-Ponty's (2002) notion of reversibility, where neither sensation can be felt at the same time, but there is an alternation between touching and touched. A body is thus not simply a thing inserted between objective world and subjective sphere but is a fundamental constituent of an embodied perceptual capacity; the mind-body-world nexus.

We therefore come to learn how to inhabit our various physical cultural spaces through our interaction with these spaces and places. These various environments afford us opportunities from which to learn and develop a level of somatic knowledge that would be unfamiliar to those outside of those physical cultures. For example, the swimmers in this

study can only begin to understand and appreciate how highly nuanced changes in water temperature will affect their performance through a process of socio-cultural and physical-cultural socialization and attunement that is learnt and incorporated into their individual body-schemas. This process also forms part of their wider participation within the physical cultural lifeworld of competitive swimming. This process of somatic and sensory learning is akin to that reported by the mountaineers in research by Allen-Collinson and colleagues (2019). These mountaineers come to recognize and understand various high-altitude weather conditions by developing an active, reflexive, sometimes mindful "weathering" attitude (Vannini, Waskul, Gottschalk, & Ellis-Newstead, 2012b) or "weather endurance" (Allen-Collinson, 2018). This mode of being-in-the-world can only be acquired through time spent in these high-altitude environments. This emplaced sensory skill development is also true of other sports, for example in skateboarding Borden (2001) refers to "skateboarder's eye" and in parkour Clegg and Butryn (2012) refer to "parkour vision", both of which allude to a heightened visual sense that affords skaters and traceurs respectively the opportunity to view the architecture around them as a creative and interactive space. This architecture thus affords these practitioners a different set of perception-action opportunities than it would me as a non-skater or non-traceur. We therefore interact with our respective socio-cultural and physical cultural environments in an active and reciprocal way, both shaping and being shaped by them. Such embodied practical skills are thus learnt, undertaken, developed and refined through shared cultural practices.

6.2 The Somatic Senses

Until now this chapter has focused on the cutaneous elements of a swimmer's haptic experience and how those can impact on performance, but as alluded to above, haptic experience goes beyond skin level and involves what Paterson (2009) described as the 'somatic senses' (kinaesthesia, proprioception and the vestibular system). It is these more internally felt components of the haptic that I know turn, utilising what the swimmers refer to as their 'feel for the water' in an attempt to bring these sensations to life. 'Feel for the water' as a concept is a combination of the swimmer's cutaneous touch ability to 'catch' and hold water with their hands and feet in order to generate forward momentum, aligned with the various positive and negative interoceptively felt sensations that can accompany a 'good' or 'bad' catch and feel. This 'feel for the water' is possibly the most prominent and

important concept of a swimmer's haptic experience and their ability to 'do', as Mary-Jane comments:

> Erm, I rely on my feel of the water a lot. So, like if I'm having a bad session, chances are it will be because my feel of the water isn't great. Erm, so like when I'm having a good session, I will be aware and I'll know that my hips are high, that my glutes and like quads are like activated, that my kind of, you know my triceps, like the in-sweep is strong. I'll feel strong and I'll feel powerful and I do rely on that a lot, even in like technique sessions, in drill sessions. I'll do a lot of sculling, paddle work, I like having good feel. If I don't have the feel, then I kind of doubt myself I guess, because if my feel of the water is good, I feel good. If my feel of the water isn't good, then I'm not, like for me I'm not having a good day (Mary-Jane Interview, 3rd November 2017).

Mary-Jane also begins to highlight the different elements of a good and bad feel for the water, but describing this haptic experience was one of the most difficult for the swimmers to do and it was just as challenging to write about. To make best efforts in describing this experience as evocatively as possible, I again provide two short 'creative nonfictional' stories (Smith et al., 2015; Sparkes, 2002) generated from the swimmers' accounts, recorded via interviews and poolside conversations (see appendices 3 to 6 for examples), and my own embodied experiences of being a swimmer, with the aim of describing the haptic experience of a good and a bad feel for the water.

> ***A Good Feel for the Water***
>
> *As I prepare to enter the pool, I am hoping that my feel is there today. It's a tough set that coach has written, and I don't want to be struggling before I even start. As I dive in and take the first few strokes, I am pleased to feel the water is firm in my hands. Hands that feel larger than usual. At the front of my stroke I can grip and hold what feels like bucketsful of water, creating pressure on the water that fixes my hand in position. As I begin to pull, the water feels like the rungs of a ladder as I grip on and start to climb. I feel the strength and power in my arms as I begin to move forward over my hand, an action that fills me with a pleasurable sensation as I know today will be a good day. It lifts my mood, makes me feel higher in the water and allows me to connect up the other elements of my stroke. As the session progresses and we begin the hard, main set, I feel like I am flying, skimming across the surface of the water, keeping my stroke long and relaxed and stroke count down, saving energy allowing me to push on and continue to swim efficiently and with 'easy speed'. My shoulders feel the warmth of effort and this is a good burn, a satisfactory burn not like when things are going bad. I hope this set goes on forever as I never want this feeling to end.*

A Bad Feel for the Water

As I prepare to enter the pool, I am hoping that my feel is there today. It's a tough set that coach has written, and I don't want to be struggling before I even start. As I dive in and take the first few strokes, I am suddenly filled with dread. I feel sluggish, heavy in the water. My hands feel like they are not there or like I'm swimming with closed fists as they just slip at the front of my stroke. I have no feel, no catch, my arms and hands are just spinning around. It's like the water is almost mocking me as it seemingly parts like Moses parting the Red Sea around my hands. Hands that are desperately trying to get a hold of something, anything. This continues throughout the whole stroke as my hand continues to try to find some water to hold onto, moving left and right out of its normal pulling pattern, causing more frustration. I am already thinking about how much of a train wreck this main set is going to be, which takes my focus even further away from trying to find something positive in my stroke and just makes me feel lower and slower in the water. As we begin the main set nothing has changed. I try to go faster, but I'm just spinning, arms and hands going around like a windmill. I've got no power; my stroke count is rising as I try to drag myself through the water for each rep. As I tire my shoulders start to burn but not a good burn like when I'm swimming well. This is horrible. It feels like a waste of time being here and I just want this to end as soon as possible.

The two short stories are intended to give an idea of the active and contingent nature of a swimmer's 'feel for the water'. This 'feel' can change from session to session, day to day, or week to week depending on the phase of the season, or time out of the water, bringing forward both positive and negative emotions (Frank and Hope Interviews; Various Fieldnotes). The same water can of course also be perceived very differently by different swimmers on the same day. Much like technique, the swimmers' active touching of the water is not a fixed permanent ability, and its contingency brings about other physical, sensory, and emotional responses. For example, a good feel for the water is linked to the kinaesthetic and proprioceptive feelings of good technique, strength, and power. In this conceptualisation a swimmer's touch on the water is therefore not only cutaneous, but translates/connects to the more visceral, internally felt swimming sensations: both of which form a significant part of a swimmer's haptic experience. It is the less exteroceptive senses of touch that I now consider focusing on the visceral elements to haptic experience: kinaesthesia and proprioception**.** I will briefly introduce both these concepts before providing examples of their influence on the swimming sensorium.

Kinaesthesia, according to Gibson (1966), is the perception of the body's movement not as a distinct, individuated sense, but as cutting across several perceptual systems. Although distinct from proprioception (see below), both involve a sense of felt embodiment created through sensory information generated from receptors throughout the body. Kinaesthesia, derived from the Greek *kinein* (to move), is the sensing of movement through muscular effort that utilises information from the nervous system in relation to muscular tension and balance but does not correspond to a singular set of particular sensors. It is therefore not a single sense but is formed through the synergistic conjunction or nexus of internal sensation and external perception (Paterson, 2009).

Proprioception, derived from the Latin *proprius* (one's own), is perhaps a more contested term, but often conceptualised as a perceptual system based on the sensory returns from nerve endings in the muscles, so that one can feel the position of one's limbs in space. No matter if the body is vertical as on land, or horizontal as while swimming, the axis of the body is literally 'felt' as upright or prone and movement is distinguished in relation to this position. As Leder clarifies:

> …proprioception traces out a completed sense of my surface body, allowing me to adjust every limb, every muscle, in appropriate motoric response to tasks. Though visually this sense is subliminal, I can close my eyes and proprioceptively hone in on the position, the level of tension and relaxation, in any regions of the muscular body (Leder, 1990, p. 42).

As with kinaesthesia, proprioception relies not just on particular receptors within the muscles and skin (proprioceptors), but functions as a nexus for a variety of sensors throughout the body to provide a sense of the body's felt place in space. For example, in a darkened room, one is (normally) still able to feel that one's body is upright, or one's arm is outstretched (Paterson, 2009). While in agreement with Paterson's (2009) definition of proprioception I am also in agreement with Allen-Collinson and Owton (2015, p. 252) who expand proprioception to include not only the neuromuscular perceptory processes "but also perception of the viscera and internal spaces of one's body" and of "enclosed or encircled corporeal space" (Morley, 2001, p. 76).

Along with the vestibular system these 'somatic senses', although defined here individually, are interrelated and co-dependent, working, as Merleau-Ponty (2005, p.369) says, in a "synergic totality", providing reafferent feedback from receptors distributed throughout the body that allow actors to anticipate, learn, and perform complex movements, for example, dance (Ram, 2005), martial arts moves (Downey, 2005), or in this case swimming. In the pool, the 'doing' of swimming action requires the development of an embodied state of awareness of one's body in motion and space, in the horizontal plane, and in different bodily orientations, as well as being partially or fully submerged in the water (Fieldnotes, October 2017; February 2018; July 2018). Clint and Logan both note the importance of the somatic senses in swimming, especially proprioception, with Clint even alluding to how his aquatic-based proprioception was seemingly superior to his land-based:

> ***Clint***: I'd definitely say proprioception, knowing where you are, as in knowing…where your body is in the water, how streamlined you are, where your hips are, everything sort of like that, because if you don't really have a great awareness of it then you're never going to be in the right position. You're always going to cause drag, which is going to slow you down. So, if you have a better awareness of that, it's going to help. I'd say most people in our squad have pretty good awareness of it in the water. I mean, I have a pretty shocking one out the water.
> ***GMC***: Tell me about that, why is that?
> ***Clint***: It's just very, I've always been pretty shocking at knowing where my limbs are out the water.
> ***GMC***: Clumsy?
> ***Clint***: Effectively clumsy. If [in] S&C (strength and conditioning) we're getting a new exercise or a physio's doing a new exercise with me, I don't really learn it very well. She needs to make sure I'm in the right position because I'm [usually] doing something completely wrong. Whereas in the pool it's natural. So, it's very weird that it's just, I think it's very separate. I think proprioception for the pool and the land is completely separate (Clint Interview, 26th October 2017).

> ***Logan***:…I'd say, yeah, definitely that [proprioception] makes such a massive difference because, you know, your body position in the water, that can be the difference…in terms of like efficiency of your stroke, that all makes such a big difference, being able to recognise that your hips are dropping and not having to rely on your coach saying, oh, you know, you need to bring your hips up or your coach saying oh your elbow needs to be higher, I think especially when you're younger it will help you learn those skills much faster if you've got better proprioception I'd say (Logan Interview, 27th October 2017).

Despite the inherent importance of these somatic senses, however, utilising them correctly within the aquatic lifeworld proved to be challenging for many of the swimmers, with several (including Gwen, Matthew and Hope), referring to a lack of ability in relation to sensing exactly where their hands or bodies were, until pointed out by a coach, or fellow swimmer:

> ***Gwen***: In terms of proprioception, I find it really hard to, like feel where my arms are. Ok, that sounds really weird. But like, when your arms coming over the water and you can't see them, like backstroke you can kinda see where your arms are, but like especially on freestyle I find it quite hard to like, know what my arms are doing. I'll think they will be fine and then Ian's like this one is all the way over here [indicates wide arm position] and I won't know (Gwen Interview, 9th October 2017).
>
> ***Matthew***: But then another day, you might be doing something, and you won't be able to feel it at all and your coach might be like 'why is your hand doing that'. Oh, I don't feel that. So, it's a strange sport because you're not seeing everything (Matthew Interview, 23rd October 2017).
>
> ***Hope***: …when I've been doing something for a long time, say my dive, I find that the hardest to change. Because it's such a quick movement it's hard to know how it feels and you're in the air as well. So, like different positions, I'd dive and come up and be like 'was that it?' Like not knowing myself if anything changed. And then on like my backstroke sometimes when I enter the water above my head, it's too much to the left, too much to the right, erm,
> ***GMC***: Are you aware of that?
> ***Hope***: No, I feel like I'm doing it,
> ***GMC***: Where it should be?
> ***Hope***: but I often get told I'm not. Cos, you can't see it as well (Hope Interview, 16th October 2017)

This apparent lack of precision in 'somatic sensation' was also evident during observed sessions especially when the swimmers were tasked with executing stroke drills. For example, if asked to perform a freestyle drill designed to work on their body position by extending one arm in front, keeping the other by their side and kicking along at a 45° body angle from the horizontal, despite knowing this and knowing their own stroke several of the swimmers often over-rotated to almost, and sometimes beyond 90°. When asked about why they were in this position, most commented on not even realising they had been and struggled to correct it even after being made aware (Fieldnote, 20th October 2017 AM). Similarly, while doing some filming with Ronan during a session mid-season, Nick spotted that Ronan was rotating his left hand on freestyle entry, to a point where his little finger

was pointing down and his thumb up towards the ceiling, before rolling back flat and beginning his catch. When I asked Ronan if he realised he was doing this, or felt he was doing this, his response was a resounding 'nope' along with a shake of the head. Nick sent Ronan off to work on it and then re-filmed him to see if he had corrected this technical error. I then asked Ronan if this felt strange, to which he commented that he was: "thinking about not letting it roll over, which was making it seem a bit odd, but the actually catch and pull hasn't changed, it's just he was now focusing on not letting this error happen" (Fieldnote, 9th February 2018 AM). A similar situation occurred with Jennifer while working on her breaststroke turn, where her aim was to plant both her feet on the wall beside each other, running parallel to the surface of the water. However, her feet were often observed to be one forward of the other or slightly turned inwards, to which she commented: "I don't even know I am doing it at the time" (Fieldnote, 16th July 2018 AM).

6.3 The Role of Vision

The use of video to illuminate discrepancies with technique was a consistent theme throughout the data collection. However, when specifically asked during the interviews about the role of vision in swimming, its immediate use was not generally reported by the swimmers, with only four interviewees mentioning using it specifically. Bruce, Clint and Scott noted how they would use the visual effect of moving across the tiles on the bottom of pool as a way of gauging how fast they were travelling, and Peter mentioned using vision to spot were others are in training or a race. The reasons for the reported disregard of vision as a key sense in swimming revolved around swimmers' immersion in water, as well as the confines of their stroke technique that limited head movements often used on land to scan a visual field (c.f. Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2006). Importantly, however, when discussing how the swimmers made adjustments to their stroke technique, the use of the coaches' eyes or video to provide a link between somatic sensation and actual movement, became highly apparent. Vision thus became an active part of the swimmers 'doing', as the following examples highlight:

> ***Gwen:*** Sometimes, sometimes he [coach] will say something and I'll have no idea what he is talking about, because he can see it from his perspective. But because I'm doing it, I can't, I just don't get what he is on about.
> ***GMC***: Have you got an example by any chance?

> ***Gwen***: Hmm, [pause], so like, with my head position on freestyle he says I'm kind of tilted up a little bit, rather than looking straight down at the bottom of the pool. But to me I'm looking like as far down as I can, but for him he can see that my head's pointed, tilted up a little bit, but I feel like it's completely flat and then he will show me a video and I'll be like, 'oh your right' [laughs] (Gwen Interview, 9th October 2017)

> ***Logan***: Yeah, if you can see it yourself, if you can see that, you know, you're swinging that left arm round instead of bringing it over the top, you know, your coach can tell you loads of times and you won't change it but then if you see that in a race and then you look at everyone else, look at the perfect example then I think that'd definitely insight you'd need to change it a lot more, so I do think that is a big help (Logan Interview, 27th October 2017).

> ***Fieldnote***: Bruce asks me if I have my phone with me and if I will film him as he wants to check his entry isn't drifting across the midline...He does the first one and is like "ok, that gives me a marker"…He jumps back in and goes another rep, again filmed and out he gets to look it over. "That's better he says"…He asks me if I can film a third time, I oblige, he jumps in does what he needs to do, jumps out and views the video again. "That's the one" he says obviously pleased with what he has seen (Fieldnote, 5th July 2018 PM).

It should be cautioned, however, that I am not suggesting that the swimmers have a distinct lack of somatic knowledge. These swimmers already display a highly attuned level of bodily knowledge by performing the highly skilled actions needed to be a competitive swimmer. To say that they have the same somatic swimming sense as a non-swimmer would be to do them a disservice. This highly attuned somatic system does, however, sometimes need to be 'calibrated' through the use of another person's eyes or via video. A point supported by Parviainen and Aromaa (2017, pp. 487-488) who note how "bodily knowledge is usually developed in dialogue with co-movers, teachers and coaches":

> ***Stephen***: I'd say [I'm] maybe 80 percent accurate. So, I can feel like my hand is going in the right place but if it's not that's where the video comes in cos you need to…calibrate...I never thought of it like this, but you're sort of calibrating. So, you watch the video, you might adjust how you feel. Like we never think of it like this but it's kind of what's happening, you're adjusting how you view. So, if I'm swimming and I feel like my hand is going in there [in line with shoulder] but then someone shows me a video and says, "that's not where your hands going", from then on I'll think that my hands not going in there [in line with shoulder] my hands going in there [behind the head] so I sort of adjust for that. But you will need to do it a lot because you'll forget, things will change (Stephen Interview, 17th October 2017).

This apparent calibration of the haptic system by using the visual brings forth two lines of thinking. Firstly, the swimmers have developed and utilise a highly skilled form of vision, or 'skilled vision' (Grasseni, 2004) specifically attuned to seeing elements of swimming technique that would be unrecognised to the untrained or novice eye. To engage with 'skilled vision' the swimmers therefore must learn to look in the right place, educating their intentionality to be sensitive to what is meaningful in order to grasp the relevant visual reference points either from the video, or from coaches' verbal and non-verbal cues. This then allows the swimmers to explore alternatives in practice. 'Swimming vision' is therefore a skill that is developed over time and with practice, resulting in a very specialised visual sense, 'attuned' to the requirements of the specific physical culture (Allen-Collinson et al., 2018a).

Secondly, 'calibration' adds weight to the notion of our sensing in 'synaesthesia', where different vectors of sensory perception intertwine with other elements of the sensorium. As Calvert et al. (2004) emphasise, rarely do we experience a single sensory modality, but rather multisensory processes, with two or more senses working in concert. It should also be noted that I am not privileging the visual over the haptic; the swimmer needs both hands and eyes, touch and vision, in order to perform active correlation and literally 'get a grip' or re-grip upon a technique or skill. The visual and the haptic are therefore linked through the kinaesthetic action of swimming; a position that contrasts with the characteristic of modernity in which the head and vision are often seen as separate from, or superior to, the remainder of the body (Ingold, 2004).

This combination of haptic and visual experience thus brings me to be in agreement with both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, who, despite some differences in their approach and methods, write of the importance of acknowledging how senses work together. For Husserl (1970) there is the "I do" of a corporeal, kinaesthetically functioning being, an expression from which Merleau-Ponty (2002) subsequently draws influence in his distinction between "I think" and "I can" to contrast a static, visual notion of perception with that of a motile one, that combines various senses into a coherent unity. In doing so it leads Merleau-Ponty (2002, pp. 158-159) to "understand motility as basic intentionality" in which kinaesthetic capacity is key to anticipative action, and stands behind our interaction with things

(Paterson, 2007). Motility thus links together diverse somatic and sensory experiences, "not placing them all under the control of an 'I think', but by guiding them towards the intersensory unity of a 'world'" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 159). From a phenomenological perspective, movement or potential movement, thus helps correlate the various patterns of sensation, visual, tactile, and somatic into the framework of the anticipative stance, the intentional, felt unity of the body (Paterson, 2007). This position was exemplified by the swimmers' need to engage with visual representations of what they were doing, in addition to the 'felt' interoceptive sense of this, to be able to understand more fully their own motility and skilled practice.

From what has been presented thus far in this chapter it is clear that the shifted sensorium of competitive swimming places a heavy reliance on the haptic system; a system that Lund (2005, p. 28, emphasis in original) describes as synonymous with "*how* the body moves in different contexts." In a similar vein to Ingold's (2004) literal grounding of perception through the feet as muscular consciousness, the swimmers' haptic experiences identify that touch is not reducible to tactility or tactile sensation alone. 'Doing' swimming combines sensations distributed throughout the body, felt within the muscles, movement and balance, along with feelings of temperature and pain, combined with vision, to bring about successful skilled performance. In closing this chapter, I consider a further concept of salience in the swimming lifeworld; time, specifically inner time, which is often neglected in the sociology of sport literature, and perhaps surprising given the centrality of time to most sports (Allen-Collinson, 2003).

6.4 Inner Time or Durée

Time is an essential part of how we experience the world, yet it is not something that we can see, hear, touch, or smell. We can measure time via hours, minutes, and seconds, however, how we experience time as a conscious lived experience doesn't always map on to 'linear' or 'clock time' (Adam, 1990). We talk about and experience time as flying or dragging, but as the following fieldnote suggests, the swimmers have developed their experience of time to include a somatic sense of time, what Schütz (1967) refers to as inner time or *durée*, the present moment of lived experience:

> As they [the swimmers] get a few solid reps under their belts, they start to look a little more alive and more like themselves. Their near metronomic feel for pace is evident as they hold repeated reps at their white pace and then casually shift to the next gear for the pink one without it even looking like they have done anything different. This mastery of speed and their apparent incorporation of time as a felt sensation is a skill worth considering more (Fieldnote, 25th January 2018 AM).

This corporeal, felt sense of time requires a complex series of actions involving the coordination of various body parts, along with the respiratory system to produce movement at the right intensity and speed. The swimmers are then able to understand different swimming times/paces through their own embodied efforts and form of 'biological clock'. Wacquant (2004) similarly recounts how time became incorporated into his 'biological clock' in boxing, allowing him to count his own three-minute segments in the absence of his coach timing him 'in' and 'out' of activity. Allen-Collinson (2003) notes a similar experience in relation to distance running where the linear and cyclical time of training and racing not only marks runners' bodies physically (lean, tight musculature), but also helps develop a specific sense of inner running time that forms a component of a runner's *time habitus* (Métoudi, 1994, p. 371). This inner time allows the runners to understand various running paces (e.g. 7 minutes per mile) and durations via embodied feeling, a corporeal way of knowing that was subsequently (temporarily) lost during a period of rehabilitation from serious knee injury.

Durée as a sense of lived time thus extends the notion of time beyond a simple quantifiable measurement to become linked to an individual's emotions, sensations, and perceptions (Melucci, 1996) through which the swimmers develop a highly attuned sense of athletic timing, allowing the swimmers to ascertain fairly accurately the actual pace of their swimming. Durée in swimming is therefore learnt, developed, and refined via thousands of kilometres of swimming practice, what Wacquant (1995, p. 67) refers to as '*bodily labor',* that is underpinned by somatic feel, and incorporated into the bodily schema much in the way that other skills or habits are (as previously portrayed). This process was described by Charles and Eddie:

> ***Charles***: I think, like yeah you get to the point where if, if you said, I don't know do a 50 at like, I don't know 32 seconds like, like chances are you could get pretty close to that just from the feel like. I think well, well I plot my metres

> and since January I've done like, I think I'm just under 1.8 million at the moment, metres since January. So, it's like, it's, you, you do get used to it like, you know what you're doing (Charles Interview, 26th October 2017).

> ***GMC:*** How do you [know pace]?
> ***Eddie***: Yeah, it's kind of like I know it's going to take me 12 minutes to walk home, at the pace I walk at, so it's just like you know. It differs a little bit day by day, like if you're feeling awful, like if you had no power in you, then obviously it's going to take you putting a bit more effort in. But in the warm-up, you know how you feel, so you just know how much effort you have to put in to do a certain time. We've been doing it for, I've been doing it over half my life now, so I know how it feels to go this time. I know when I'm feeling good, it's just, it's so ingrained into us of how we swim a certain way to do a certain time. It's just natural now… (Eddie Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Durée, as Schütz (1967) notes, therefore draws upon elements of the past and the future. The swimmer has an embodied knowledge from the repetitive nature of the sport and thus comes to understand pre-reflexively what various paces feel like. However, the swimmer must also have a temporal sense of the future in which the act, and sensations associated with swimming a certain pace are projected. These elements thus combine to bring about a meaningful unit of action of inner time for the swimmer that includes the present, the past through memory, and the future through anticipation (Barber, 2017).

Like most skills and habits, and as noted by Allen-Collinson (2003), the experience of inner-time and pace is also not permanent, learnt once-and-for-all, but needs constant refinement. Periods of injury or times out of the water can have a significant impact upon an athlete's ability to feel and understand pace, but durée is also affected by how the swimmers feel moment to moment, session to session, day to day. The swimmers thus have to use their haptic, and somatic feelings to make the necessary daily adjustments to their inner metronome depending on how they feel, as the following interview extract highlights:

> ***GMC***: So, for me then, my way of looking at that is that time is kind of becoming internalised, felt but that…
> ***Clint***: It can get thrown off though massively. Like the other day when we did like a max 50m, well we did like a max 100 and then we had to do [a 50] like under 40 seconds and I'd go like 33, but it felt like a 39…
> ***Wade***: Yeah
> ***Clint***: …so it can be massively thrown off when you push it, so that's about it really.

> ***GMC***: Ok, so, how you feel each day, can sort of vary that [feeling of time]. So, if one day you're feeling good 1:15 feels really easy and another day you are feeling really heavy 1:15 feels hard.
> ***Wade***: I feel like after you have done 1 rep of whatever you are doing you can adjust very easily, like you know exactly where you need to be going for the next rep etcetera.
> ***Eddie***: Yeah
> ***GMC***: I guess is that just something that comes with time and experience and…
> ***Wade***: Yeah cos we have done it some many times we know what 1:15 feels like on certain days cos we have all felt rubbish we have all felt good (Group Interview three, 16th July 2018)

Durée thus forms part of an important, highly attuned sensory skillset that plays a key role in structuring the swimmer's perceptions and their lifeworld. As Schütz and Luckmann note:

> The structure of life-worldly time is built up where the subjective time of the stream of consciousness (of inner duration) intersects with the rhythm of the body as "biological time" in general, and with the seasons as world time in general, or as calendar or "social time" (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 47).

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted the importance of haptic experience to the doing of competitive swimming. In doing so I have shown how both conceptualisations of thermoception, as a form of touch (Geurts, 2002) and as a distinct sense (Potter, 2008), are 'viable' and reverberate with the swimmers' lived experience, and often intertwine or blur together. For example, the touch of water on the skin can lead to internal feelings of heat or cold. This blurring is commensurate with much phenomenological thinking that favours the messy, fluid, and complex notions of perceptual modes. Additionally, I have highlighted how the somatic senses of kinaesthesia and proprioception are fundamental to a swimmer understanding their body in an aquatic environment, but also how these somatic senses can sometimes be 'thrown out of sync' and need re-calibrating through the use of vision, and visual cues. Again, this adds weight to the notion of the senses working in concert to generate an overall sensory 'feel' or intersensory perception of a phenomenon (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). Each of these examples, added to the felt sense of time, form part of the swimmers' sensory 'stock of knowledge' (Schütz, 1967) that they can call upon in order to continue to engage effectively with their competitive swimming lifeworld.

In this and the previous chapter, I have shown how the sensory and motor abilities of the body unite in executing skilled performance where the body becomes the "crux or reference point that establishes a stable perceptual background against which [the swimmers] perceive and respond to changes and movements in [their] environment" (Carman, 1999, p. 220). In this inter-relationship between moving body and its surrounding environment, bodies become 'tuned' for certain experiences, and information, developing a sensitivity in which 'listening to the body' by focusing on felt sensations facilitates a greater awareness of these bodies and helps reach a higher degree of bodily knowledge (Parviainen & Aromaa, 2017). There is one further element of this 'listening to the body' that needs to be explored in reference to building bodily ways of knowing in swimming; that being the linked notions of discomfort, pain, and enduring. It is to these that I now turn.

Chapter 7: Discomfort, Pain, and Enduring

> Eddie and Stephen have the ANP [Anaerobic Power] set that Nick wrote for the girls[17] on Monday evening. Now the girls found this tough enough on Monday PM, so I can only imagine what the boys, who are carrying considerably more muscle mass than the girls, will make of it.
>
> It doesn't take long for me to find the answer to this question. Eddie on the 1st of the 15m under water (UW) reps comes to the surface, and literally barks the air out of his lungs and gulps for fresh oxygen. This is repeated as he does the other UW parts of what can only be described as an ugly set. As Eddie finishes the final rep of nine 50s, he is quickly out onto the side, sprawled on his back, face red and screwed up in discomfort, chest heaving up and down as air rushes in and out of his lungs in an attempt to normalise his breathing. As Hank tries to get a lactate reading from Eddie, he is trying not to move around too much. As Hank takes the blood, Eddie is then free to shake out his arms and legs in an attempt to remove the lactate. Scott goes over to ask him if he is "alright hun", but Eddie is still just rocking and rolling his head around, gasping for air, trying to re-establish some normality.
>
> Once he is able to compose himself, he walks down the other end of the pool and sits down, slumped on the seats, elbows resting on knees, head hanging low with a vacant look on his face. I ask him how that was but get absolutely no response. If anything, no response is probably enough of a response for me to know that it was fairly savage. After a few minutes Eddie is back with us and is up moving around. I ask him again how this was, and he just replies with "Fucking Hard". Nick comes over then and Eddie comments on how he was "absolutely on my arse after the butterfly". Nick is like "good, that's what we wanted". "I felt terrible" Eddie adds "I could hardly make the UWs". Nick just smiles and goes to ask Hank about the two lads' results (Fieldnote, 11th July 2018 PM).

Sensuous information in relation to discomfort and pain can be reached by engaging in physical effort, and the above fieldnote demonstrates how, during training, swimmers' bodies are regularly pushed to their physical limits in the pursuit of training adaptations. Discomfort and pain, and the tolerating of these various sensations in their various forms therefore constitutes an integral part of the everyday routine of competitive swimming, where training can be seen as 'work' that conditions the body and mind as swimmers learn to endure. Pain and enduring are thus a fundamental state of mind and of general *Dasein* for those who 'do competitive swimming', and are closely interwoven with the doing of

[17] Girls / Boys; Lads / Ladies – terms often used by coaches and other swimmers in reference to male and female members of the team.

swimming, as discussed in Chapter 5, and the sensory education/transformation undertaken as part of that doing discussed in Chapter 6. Like all sensory knowledge, however, expressing these feelings and describing them in detail can be difficult. Both these points, the normality and normalisation of pain, and the difficulties in expressing it are emphasised by Stephen who commented how:

> …physically, swimming is extremely painful and it's very hard to describe to a non-swimmer because there is nothing that, sort of, erm, relates to it. There is no feeling to describe the last length of a 200 back when, or the 40th 100 of a, of a Thursday morning smash set where you are just on fire for two hours. It's 5 o'clock in the morning and you're just on fire (Stephen Interview, 17th October 2017).

This form of shared knowing about pained embodiment was also portrayed by Matthew, who further highlighted how swimmers and other athletes construct some forms of pain as positive, and also having a moral dimension:

> ***Matthew***: It's like, we have that slogan "no pain, no gain" which is thrown around a lot, but people know, I think athletes know what that means. If you're not gonna really push yourself on any predicted given day, you're not going to feel that buzz of "oh-yeah I really put myself through it and I'm gonna improve", that self-reward (Group Interview two, 10th July 2018).

As Matthew indicates in the above extract, in sport and physical cultures "no pain, no gain" is a common mantra often used to signify the necessity to undertake hard physical labour, sacrificing time, money, and sociality in order to achieve a goal and make it 'worth it'. But this kind of suffering in competitive swimming is, as Throsby (2016) argues in relation to marathon swimming, not suffering for the sake of suffering. For the majority of the athletes involved, suffering actually took on a positive aspect, where the 'pain' or 'burn' of training became part of the journey and a marker of progression, as Bruce and Natasha highlight:

> ***Bruce***: I know if I'm really, really working hard physically, I get…pins and needles up my shins, just my shins.
> ***GMC***: Is that, do you use that as an indicator of
> ***Bruce***: Yeah
> ***GMC***: Yeah, you're smiling, is it as a good thing, 'yeah I'm on this tonight'?
> ***Bruce***: Yeah definitely, I know that I am definitely going for it if I feel the pins and needles in my shins.
> ***GMC***: So, you're one of those crazy people that likes the pain. So, you're using that discomfort as positive experience almost?
> ***Bruce***: Yeah, I think that's, yeah true, I've turned pain into a good thing, because I think, well, if this is good pain, it's not pain where someone's chain

> sawing your leg off, where you don't want them to chainsaw your leg off, it's pain that's going to make you a better athlete and I want to be a better athlete, so I sort of use, I can chose to hurt myself, do you know what I mean, and it's helping me at the same time.
> ***GMC***: So that concept of dying on your arse.
> ***Bruce***: Yeah nobody else, nobody is making me do this, that's what I think like. Nobody has told me to come here, it's 'go hard or go home' really and you shouldn't really be here if you're not willing to hurt yourself (Bruce Interview, 4th October 2017).

> ***Natasha***: So, I guess, that yeah, like we, you always wanna be like sore or be, because then you are seeing results aren't you. If you were always just feeling easy and everything was always easy then everyone would do it. But if you're feeling sore and you're seeing results, that that's the results that you are seeing, if you know what I mean.
> ***GMC***: So, you quite enjoy that...
> ***Natasha***: Oh yeah, I don't like not, like I like it in taper, I like to be like sore free but like during, when you're in season the sorer the better… I think if you was to get obviously like a cut or something like that, that different kind of pain, but like a lactate acid type of pain is more like a burning sensation but it like your whole body feels really heavy and when you're swimming your form goes, so your technique will end up going because you literally can't pull your arms out of the water because they feel like they weigh a 100 kilos each, and like yeah, it's like a horrible feeling [laughs] because you're absolutely dead, but if you push yourself through that horrible feeling, you know that like that's one step closer to like a PB (Personal Best) (Natasha Interview, 26th October 2017).

Pain and discomfort are therefore inevitable elements of competitive swimming, and yet that does not mean that swimmers actively seek out pain *per se*. Competitive swimmers don't swim for the pain; that is not their ultimate aim or outcome. They do, however, accept pain as part of their embodied doing, and seemingly embrace the suffering that comes with it. Not all pain, however, is the same, and over time, and with practice swimmers learn to distinguish between the different qualities and intensities of various painful experiences in order to understand what is deemed helpful or what could result in an injury. Writing of marathon swimming, Throsby (2016) uses Hanold's (2010) categories of 'discomfort', 'good pain' and 'bad pain' to bring to life these differing painful experiences. As a result of Throsby's (2016) use of these categories in marathon swimming it made sense to use the same categories within this thesis to bring a level of continuity between these very similar but differing aquatic disciplines. I would, however, caution that although presented here and dealt with as separate categories for analytic purposes, in

practice it is more pertinent to conceptualise these experiences of pain as interactional, as competitive swimmers engage with a variety of training modalities from recovery right through to high intensity anaerobic training.

7.1 Discomfort and 'Good Pain'

In terms of defining these labels, both 'discomfort' and 'good pain' can be understood as a positive part of the swimming experience; what Crossley (2004a, pp. 53-54) refers to as the "sensations that would in most contexts be experienced as uncomfortable and painful, and as such would tend to terminate activity" but within the context of physical cultures these sensations are welcomed, often signifying progress, as attested by both Bruce and Natasha (quoted earlier) along with several other participants.

For swimmers, discomfort can relate to sensations such as fatigue in the achy body of post training, where fatigued muscles were taken to signify that training had been effective. This was emphasised by Gwen, who commented during interview that she "like[s] it when you've just got out of the pool and you're just sitting there, and you can't get changed because you're actually so tired" (Gwen Interview, 9th October 2017). Eddie develops this further noting how he "love[s] feeling sore" and that soreness equates to:

> …general muscle soreness, but then when you get into proper pre-season, you go from doing zero sessions to seven sessions pretty fast, and you're just achy, like it's just sore to sit down, everything's just awful. Like you're trying to swim, you literally can't pull your arm, but I just love. I think I love it because there's no pressure on you then. Like, when you feel awful, there's no pressure for you to do good. And, if I do, do really well when I'm feeling awful, then it means that there's proper big things to come. If you can do something while you're feeling shit, when you're feeling good, you're going to do something pretty spectacular (Laughing) (Eddie Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Discomfort therefore was considered to have a temporal dimension because it was related to the longer-term sensations of repeated training that often carry over into subsequent sessions; a point emphasised by the following fieldnote taken from a relatively low-intensity morning session that followed a particularly tough session the evening before:

> The first block of the session after [warm-up] sees them [the swimmers] going 24x50m. They can do these as butterfly or backstroke. The backstroke ones require increasing the stroke rate for three and then holding that stroke rate

> for three. As Remy and Wade finish the first of the holding rate ones, Remy comments “oh my shoulders” and Wade says, “fatigue was real then”. They both blow out their cheeks, sigh and shake their heads as well. Remy is straight into rubbing his traps [trapezius] trying to massage them out a little bit. They might have made these comments, but they are straight back on it for the next rep (Fieldnote, 9th February 2018 AM).

This discomfort can also be as a result of dry land strength and conditioning training that then translates into the water environment:

> I’m working with the other group on the speed kick. In fact, I’m working with both groups because Tony still hasn’t been able to get out of his meeting. The first round isn’t as good as the 2nd and 3rd. In the first Logan mentions that he didn’t feel very sharp; legs are a bit heavy. Bruce says how he is sore from the gym. Matthew nods in agreement. “Normal sore or different sore?” I ask them. “Normal gym ache” they shoot back at me. Normal, but enough to be affecting them as they swim. This chimes with what the lads said about the other day in that each day is very much a rollercoaster of how they will feel and that they can’t look too far ahead in the week cos they could well be hurting more than they should on some days (Fieldnote, 12th July 2018 AM).

To manage this form of discomfort, the swimmers would actively engage with a range of pre- and post-pool exercises, adding to the already large number of body techniques (Mauss, 1979) and reflexive body techniques (Crossley, 2004a, 2004b, 2005b) used within this particular physical culture (See Chapter 5). This included soft tissue massages from the physiotherapy team, or individual foam rolling, or using tennis or hockey balls to get at deeper muscles, as well as a variety of different stretches and activation exercises.

Additional to this muscular discomfort it is also possible to classify a particularly large appetite, and the desire to nap after sessions in order to refuel, as welcomed ‘discomforts’. Both of these ‘positive discomforts’ signify effective training performance and the ability to seemingly eat huge quantities of food, along with napping as required, were reported not only as essential to surviving as a competitive swimmer, but also as positive side effects of being a member of this lifeworld.

‘Good pain’, although similar to discomfort in being coded as positive, differs from discomfort by being understood and articulated more clearly as ‘pain’ as well as being more aligned to the acute, temporal elements of a specific training session or set, as opposed to

the longer lasting effects of discomfort. This point was emphasised by Matthew and Wade who both describe how good pain builds up during moments of effort but then dissipates during rest or recovery periods:

> ***Matthew***: I think good pain is something that like builds up, builds up, builds up and then dies away, dies away, dies away, and you're happy to let it build up and you're happy to let it build up so much cos you know about it (Group interview two, 10th July 2018).

> ***Wade***: Well, it's like when, towards the end of like a, like a rep, like say a rep of a 100 like the last 25 it'll, it'll really start to hurt and then you'll come to the wall, you'll hurt for about 10/15 seconds and then your muscles will start coming back and you'll start to be able to feel your arms again but then you'll go again and it will come back straight away. Like yeah, if you're doing back to back reps anyway sometimes it will come back straight away and you'll, it gets worse and worse, as the session goes on yeah. (Wade Interview, 1st November 2017).

This type of acute, numbing pain is particularly related to the pushing of the body towards its limits. It is pain with a *meaningful purpose* and would often be recorded in sessions designed to mimic, or go beyond, the demands of racing, in which the swimmers would have to endure duress over an extended period of time. In these situations, where sensations such as the 'burn of lactic acid' as experienced in a lactate tolerance set, or the 'grinding fatigue of repeated reps' in an aerobic endurance or threshold set are present, the swimmers would be acutely aware of the pain. These differing types of pain are specific to different types of session or set and yet they all came to be perceived 'positively' because they were taken to signal that a session is going well and that progress towards a goal is being made, as Frank notes:

> …if it's a good session and I'm swimming well, then you kind of want this pain and embrace it. It's a discomfort but when it's matched to hearing times that are quick then it becomes a good pain, a good sensation because I know it's benefitting me (Frank Follow-Up Interview, 18th October 2017).

Frank and the other swimmers have thus come to interpret and understand these painful sensations as something positive via the development of somatic and experiential knowledge. This is similar to what Allen-Collinson et al. (2018a, p. 1332) found in relation to high-altitude mountaineers, who learn how to interpret a variety of sensations in relation to learning endurance, in order to render these sensations meaningful.

Furthermore, the swimmers also reported how these specific forms of pain "will only go so far and then it can't hurt anymore" (Gwen Interview, 9th October 2017). A point supported by Jessica who comments:

> I think you just reach a certain level of pain, good pain, and it just can't get any worse, so you just continue to stay at that level of pain. And then obviously you can choose to ease off and there will be less pain but then it's like, well I've already reached my max so what's the point in giving up (Group Interview One, 9th July 2018).

To cope with this 'good pain', and continue to push their bodies to their limits, the swimmers would attempt to make the pain 'actively absent' (Aalten, 2007). Their body would therefore be telling them one thing, but they would choose not to listen. They would "learn to just shut it out" (Logan, Group Interview 2), a skill that is easier to employ if the session is going well, as Jean attests:

> I think, so when you're having a really good session, physically you forget how much pain you're in, you don't realise how much it is hurting and how much you may be physically fatigued because you are swimming so well, you go into a different, you turn into a different person really, you just go into overdrive and I think the adrenaline that gets released, well it would be endorphins I think, because you're happy with how you are swimming so, you just keep going and you start swimming on adrenaline. Erm, physically they feel, physically your best sessions I think feel great. Erm, when you look back on them you don't actually remember how much they hurt (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Additionally, as a further coping mechanism the swimmers would look to shift their focus away from that which they couldn't control (levels of pain) onto things that they could (e.g. breathing patterns), in an attempt to make the feelings of fatigue and pain less discernible, without any loss of training intensity. This highlights the cognitive-corporeal dimension of competitive swimming, as Jessica notes:

> Like you get to 25[m] and it just burns, like everything's burning, you start to get out of breath. When it, when my muscles start to ache and I, and I feel like stopping I just focus on my breathing because it helps me forget about the pain I'm going through. So, I'm just, with breaststroke I go under and I just breath everything out, come up take a big, big breath and then, cos obviously I'm lucky with breaststroke, we can breathe every stroke, it's not like frontcrawl you can't breathe [as often], cos I'd be rubbish at that [laughs]. So, I take these big breaths and then just blow out everything and then just try and focus on being long and strong (Jessica Interview, 30th October 2017).

In this conceptualisation, 'good pain' is thus deemed inevitable, and similar to the rowers studied by Pike (2005), this form of pain is considered a necessary aspect of the sport where it becomes a positive experience for the swimmers. In such a conceptualisation, Leder's (1990) notion of 'dys-appearance' is stripped of its negative connotations, and pain and discomfort can start to be seen as pleasurable, much in the same way as Shilling and Bunsell's (2009) bodybuilders reported after working muscles 'to the max', feeling the burn, in the pursuit of athletic advancement. Additionally, this goes some way to challenging any pleasure/pain dichotomy and supports Bastian et al. (2014) and Leknes et al. (2013) in regard to their conceptualisation of pain in certain contexts as being associated with positive consequences. As Throsby (2016) notes, swimmers come to understand pain as a positive part of hard training where they push the limits of their own physical capacities producing physiological, and psychological training effects. However, as Throsby (2016) also identifies, this is not the same as simply trading pain for pleasure. It is a much more complex phenomenon that is more about the recalibrating of painful experiences as normal and coming to understand how the expected painful experiences of training do not generate a cause for concern but are in fact welcomed. Discomfort, and good pain, thus become a by-product of training, and as a result can provide embodied information on pace, energy levels, and other bodily indicators of performance. For example, Natasha notes how she utilises the sensations of discomfort and good pain as a pedagogical tool that helps heighten her technical awareness in the water:

> …if your sore and you've been to the gym and then you swim, you're already numb before you get in. So, never mind that you feel good at white [pace], and then you feel a bit grim at the end, you feel grim from the beginning. So, for the sprinters it's very much like that. We get in feeling grim, the warm-up you start to feel a little bit better, cos like it kinda releases, like gets rid of the lactate acid a little bit and then you start it pretty much fucked, and you're just like gone from the beginning. But it feels amazing because you get the numbness, but you feel fast, so for me like if I'm sore, I feel faster. Cos even though I have DOMS (Delayed Onset of Muscle Soreness) and like I might be a bit tight and need to do a bit of pre-pool, like when I get in and I'm swimming fast, I feel stronger because I feel the muscles working. So, for me today my arms are sore and we were doing pull before, when I'm like pulling, like doing the first part of the catch, I can feel it like in these muscles [shoulder/latissimus dorsi] cos they are all sore, you feel when they are working because you're like, 'oh', 'ah', and you can feel it like working but that's kind of nicer because you actually get proper feel for the water and what you're doing in the water, rather than when you are completely fresh,

> and everything feels good, but you don't actually know what you're doing and like where you might not be catching the water, so if your lats don't hurt at the end of the stroke then you know that you're not like finishing the end of your stroke off, if you know what I mean. Like I do enjoy being sore because then it makes me feel stronger and makes me feel like I'm actually doing something (Natasha Interview, 26th October 2017).

Despite this obvious benefit and the ability of good pain to help collapse the dichotomy between pleasure and pain, the bodily areas in which these sensations were felt were still often objectified in a 'dys-eased style'. Good pain, especially within the legs during kick sets often brought forth comments like 'fucking hell me legs' or 'come on legs' from the swimmers as they directed their attention back onto their reified bodies; a process that, as Leder (1990, p. 170) describes, could leave a "kernel of truth" in the mind-body divide, as emphasised by Matthew:

> I think that in kick sets in particular you, they [legs] are kind of the other end of your brain, where you are sending the signals and sometimes it can be frustrating because you want them to go at a certain pace or up and down in a certain way, but when it hits a certain pain level, they just don't listen (Hope laughs), and so yeah you can objectify them in those circumstances, but they don't have ears so they don't listen (Group Interview Two, 10th July 2018).

On top of such thoughts coaches' comments like 'don't leave your legs behind' or 'work to keep hips high' could be heard throughout various training sessions encouraging swimmers to focus on specific body parts, shifting their attention from outward to inward onto themselves, changing the nature of their 'from-to' relationship with the world, as portrayed in Chapter 5 in relation to the active engagement in technique (See also section 2.5.4).

Finally, in relation to discomfort and good pain, whilst the swimmers do not actively seek pain, sensations of pain have become such an integral part of the mundane experience of competitive swimming that some participants reported missing them when they were not present. This was particularly evident and recalled when swimmers spoke of the end of season break, where after a week or so out of swimming they began to miss training and pushing their bodies. This was further highlighted when Nick started to shift his training modality in a different direction from usual and several of the swimmers began complaining about how they felt they were feeling 'too fresh, too often', as they weren't 'ragging themselves to death' (Fieldnote, 3rd July 2018 PM). The absence of pain, then,

could be perceptually more troubling than the suffering. Discomfort and good pain had for these athletes become normalised and valorised throughout their junior years, and even resulted in some swimmers opting to take more difficult options in training because they felt they should in order to push their bodies further, even if their body was telling them a different story. This is a point emphasised in the following fieldnote:

> Felicia chooses to do the slightly more challenging aec2 session but after the first block it is evident that she is struggling. Nick asks her is she is ok, and she says 'no, I feel exhausted and really heavy'. He asks her why she has chosen this set if this is how she is feeling, and her response is along the lines of "because I always feel like I should do the harder set no matter how I feel". As Nick discusses this with me, we both agree that yes, it is a great quality to want to always do the tougher set but it's a lack of understanding from Felicia, and others, about what effective training or training smart is all about. It's strange that athletes that have gotten to this level still don't listen to their bodies or understand how to train correctly (Fieldnote, 4th July 2018).

This lack of understand was perhaps even more alarming considering it was often in instances such as this where the swimmers ignored the physical signs from their body and tried to push on regardless, that 'bad pain' would arise.

7.2 'Bad Pain'

Bad pain, conceptualised by Hanold's (2010, p. 172) ultrarunners as "pain that is injury" or when "you're on the verge of hurting yourself", is subsequently experienced as distinct from discomfort and good pain not only because of its negative connotations, but also in terms of quality and intensity. This point was evidenced by the swimmers and summed up by Eddie, Wade and Clint during group interview three:

> ***Eddie***: …if I have a bad shoulder injury and I take a stroke and I get a massive big shooting pain it's more of a negative thing that comes with it, I know I shouldn't be doing this, I shouldn't be swimming if I have this. It's not even the pain that annoys me, it's more the 'I'm gonna have to get out, I'm gonna have to stop swimming' and that's what, it's more like pissed off rather than,
> ***Wade***: It's like a pain that's gonna make you better and a pain that's gonna make you worse.
> ***Eddie***: Yeah
> ***Clint***: I think that injury pain is a lot more sharp [sic] than like the actually training pain. Like training pain is more long, like longer, whereas an injury pain is just sharp, and it really hurts (Group Interview Three, 16th July 2018).

Bad pain for the swimmers is therefore predominantly associated with injury, and despite the best efforts of the swimmers to manage their levels of discomfort and good pain, continued participation in a sport where thousands upon thousands of strokes are taken daily, placing great strain upon muscles and tendons, inevitably means that injuries do occur. Although not a focus of the current thesis, it is nevertheless worth noting briefly that bad pain and injury take on significance not just at the site of bodily injury but also prove damaging to the self, emotionally and psychologically, as the following fieldnote highlights:

> I do notice Jean however getting out and looking a little despondent. "My shoulder" she says as she walks past. She doesn't look happy at all. In fact, she trots off to get some ice for it immediately and then goes to sit in the land-con room where her face and body tell a fairly precise story. One of frustration, disappointment and annoyance – slumped posture, slumped shoulders, vacant distant look, towel wrapped around her! (Fieldnote, 16th October 2017 PM).

These frustrations are also heightened as often the bad pain in swimming is invisible, trapped beneath layers of skin, living within muscles and tendons. As a result, there are no active markers of pain like cuts, bruises or breaks to signify its existence to another, in contrast to other physical cultures such as boxing or MMA where such injuries are highly visible (e.g. Spencer, 2012b). Bad pain, as well as good, is also highly subjective and in certain situations, with certain swimmers, this opens up the doors of suspicion from others (Howe, 2004) about just how much pain they are in. Such a perspective draws parallels with Moore (2013) who's football teammates questioned the 'validity' of her 'invisible' illness during a period when she was unable to play because of an acute flare-up of ulcerative colitis. Injury additionally places the swimmers in a difficult position as the swimming calendar waits for no one. Swimmers are thus constantly living on the knife edge between performance and breakdown and must manage this in order to remain in the water.

As a result, bad pain to the swimmers was predominately conceptualised as negative as it jeopardises their full and continued involvement in the competitive swimming lifeworld, preventing the swimmers from pursuing their goals. However, there was one seemingly positive outcome of bad pain that arose from the data but accessing this was dependent on the swimmer having the embodied knowledge and understanding needed to recognise it and act upon it. Like good pain, bad pain has a pedagogical effect that could lead the

swimmers to make technical adjustments in their stroke in order to relieve the pain and reduce time missed through injury, therefore helping them improve as athletes by facilitating longer periods of continued participation. For example, Bruce noted how bad pain led him to begin the process of rebuilding his stroke to alleviate the continued pain he was experiencing:

> The big thing for me, was that I was getting a lot of pain in my shoulders. I was getting very fatigued shoulders. I was having to visit the physio, once a week. I mean…it was the first time, I was routinely hitting eight sessions a week, and in the gym and everything else. I was quite fatigued, and my shoulders just couldn't hack it really. So, then I thought this has got to stop. So, I took it upon myself, Tony didn't really have a massive input in it, but I pretty much overhauled the whole thing and now I don't get any shoulder pain (Bruce Interview, 4th October 2017).

Each of the above examples typifies how pain in the swimming lifeworld has become normalised, which also reverberates with other endurance physical cultures such as triathlon (Atkinson, 2008a), distance running (Bridel et al., 2016) and cycling (Austin, 2010). Having described the three varieties of pain and shown how they can be positive or negatively constructed by insiders to the lifeworld, before moving on to highlight how the swimmers come to understand these differences, it should be emphasized that these forms of pain are not discrete categories. There is overlap between them and often sensations of discomfort and good pain, unless managed correctly through stretching, nutrition, sleep, and soft tissue remedies can lead to 'niggles' and the 'bad pain' of injury.

7.3 Understanding Discomfort and Pain

It became evident that understanding the various forms of discomfort and pain was a learning experience built over time, and through training practices that allow the swimmers to develop an appreciation of the limits of their own embodiment, providing opportunities to develop the ability to distinguish between good pain that can be overcome, and bad pain that could lead to injury. As Stephen notes when discussing cramp:

> It's just experience innit. Like, I remember the first time I got cramp, I thought I was dying, like I didn't' know what was going on, but now that I know, [I] just know what it is straight away. [When] you've experienced it over time, you know, you learn what things feel like. So obviously you're clearly going to know what the pain of a lactate set is or what you need to be looking for (Group Interview Three, 16th July 2018).

This example could also be applicable to previous injuries, where understanding as experience was further highlighted. Several of the swimmers commented on how as juniors they would simply push through 'niggles' not understanding the sensation, and as a result, cause more harm. Subsequently, they developed the ability to recognise and acknowledge feelings of 'something not being right', which would cause them to cease the activity and seek a diagnosis as soon as possible by members of the medical team. Such a finding aligns with accounts portrayed by Tynan and McEvilly (2017) of young gymnasts who highlight how during their careers as junior athletes they would have pushed their bodies further than advisable not understanding the difference between various painful sensations, often relying on their coaches to tell them what types of pain were 'normal'.

The swimmers had thus learnt to understand pain in a gamut of different ways, including as a diagnostic device and are able to distinguish discomfort and 'good' pain from 'bad' pain, forming a bodily knowledge that allows them to walk the 'fine line' between athletic performance and injury (see also Nemeth, 1998, p. 5). Through this bodily knowledge they have grasped an understanding of pain as something that can lead to both success and new knowledge (Downey, 2007).

This chapter has thus far dealt with the types of discomfort and pain to which the swimmers subject themselves in their continued engagement in the competitive swimming lifeworld. What remains to be addressed is exactly how those various painful experiences are expressed and how the swimmers refer to their bodies when undergoing these various experiences. It is to this that I now turn.

7.4 How Discomfort and Pain are Expressed

The fieldnote that opens this chapter gives some indication as to the different ways in which the discomfort and good pain of training would manifest themselves within, and on the swimmers' bodies. It is these bodily displays and feelings that are further analysed in this section. To do so, and to complement the fieldnote at the beginning of the chapter, I present three further fieldnotes that highlight some of the ways in which discomfort/pain was expressed non-verbally through bodily actions and signifiers, and how male and female swimmers bodies seem to react to and understand the same painful stimulus in similar

ways. This 'gender parallel' resonates with Young and White (1995, p. 51) and Young et al. (1994) who noted, in relation to both male and female athletes from a variety of sports including rugby, football and bodybuilding, if there was a difference between different genders experiences of pain, it was only a matter of degree:

> As Stephen finishes the set with a 54.4 [seconds] 100m backstroke, he immediately climbs out and lies on the poolside, breathing heavily, his chest rising and falling quickly as he looks to get the oxygen back in his lungs. "My heart is going mental" he says "I don't normally feel it beating, but today its jumping around". Nick is like "I'm not surprised after 54.4 on the end of that set, with 60% of it being swum underwater". Remy is also sat on the side, elbows on knees, head dropped down just trying to get some air back in his lungs (Fieldnote, 20th February 2018 AM)
>
> After round 1 Natasha comments on how that 9x25 relay is one of the hardest things they have had to do. It's the getting out and getting back on the block and for her it's an even shorter time as she is working with Logan and Luke who are swimming 10second 25s whereas she is 12, which gives one of them a little longer rest. After each round these guys are blowing heavy and hard. It takes them 2-3 minutes of just sitting or floating around to normalise their breathing once again in order to be able to begin their 300 recovery. After the 2nd set, Natasha is just sat on the side, elbows on knees, head dropped just sucking air into her lungs like it's going out of fashion, using her inhaler to help open the airways. This is a tough set – these guys are high producers of lactate acid and this simply is one of those sets designed to push it [lactate] as high as possible. Towards the back end of each of the rounds the fatigue in their bodies is even noticeable as they swim as leg kicks become leg intensive. You can see and hear the drop off in the amount of white water being produced [by the feet]. (Fieldnote, 20th February 2018 PM).
>
> Between the 2nd and 3rd of the 3x100s, Wade comments that "this is hard". I ask him what it's like to just have to sit and let the after effects of the swim just accumulate. "You can just feel the lactate buzzing around you, especially in the quads. If you end up sitting still for too long, you just start to feel sick". This obviously isn't an isolated feeling for just Wade as the majority of the swimmers, are either lying on the benches or on the floor with the feet raised, shaking their legs out. "That's better" Cletus comments, "good old shake to release the lactate". The expressions on the swimmers' faces also tell a story of how tough the set is. Some look withdrawn, with expressions that simply stare off into the distance. As Stephen tries to walk back to where he has been sitting, he visibly looks in discomfort. His face is screwed up, his walking style laboured. Wade also comments on how "I don't feel like I can stand up" … As Stephen finishes the last rep, he is just slumped over the side of the pool. He stays here for a few minutes before finally, gingerly, leaving the pool to get his fins and begin his swim-down (Fieldnote, 13th July 2018 PM).

As each of these extracts illustrates, the swimmers often showed signs of heavy laboured breathing, slumped shoulders, and heads, or in extreme cases simply lying on the poolside taking a moment to allow their body to return to a state of homeostasis. Further to these more overtly recognisable bodily actions, there were also some more subtle actions, such as swimmers who would normally lead the lane taking up different places in the lane order, or swimmers not lifting goggles at the end of a rep but instead keeping their heads down, not looking up towards the coaches but just focusing on breathing slowly, as well as more nuanced changes in technique (e.g. reduced intensity of the leg kick, shortened strokes or drifting into and out of turns) that would accompany the building discomfort and tiredness as sessions and sets moved towards their conclusion.

In addition to these bodily actions and signifiers discomfort and pain were often more overtly displayed through interaction and vocalisation both during, and between sessions. During a session, or set, this usually began with subtle comments between the swimmers like 'I'm blowing' or 'I'm hurting'. If, however, these feelings progressed or persisted and the coaches asked how the swimmers were 'feeling' it was often then elevated to comments such as 'shite', 'broken' or 'heavy', to name but a few[18]. I asked the swimmers if these terms were all synonymous with one another and they were in agreement, stating that they were simply the terminology they had been exposed to during their previous club careers, which they had subsequently brought with them to ANP Swimming. They did, however, note that all the various terms, with the exception of 'heavy' could be summarised under one umbrella term, which was 'fucked'. Feeling 'heavy' was given a different status as it referred more to an absence of the swimmers' feel for the water, as opposed to feelings of tiredness or muscle soreness. For example, Frank noted how he could feel alright in himself but just 'heavy in the water' as his feel and speed weren't there (see section 6.2). There is thus a language of pain and fatigue in competitive swimming and learning how to tolerate and talk about pain is something that must be developed and accepted as part of engagement in this particular physical-cultural lifeworld, and as has been noted in relation to other physical cultures involving pain, discomfort, and intense fatigue (e.g. Aalten, 2007; Allen-Collinson et al., 2018a; Wainwright & Turner, 2006).

[18] Other terms included: awful, grim, dead, numb, destroyed, tired and wrecked.

Additionally, there was a moral dimension to such interaction, and with reference to talking about pain, should someone's words not match their actions or bodily markers, then the other swimmers would become suspicious. As Charles, Eddie and Wade note during a group interview:

> ***Charles***: You can tell when people say it and they don't mean it as well. Like if someone just says it because everyone else is saying it...
> ***Wade***: you can tell
> ***Charles***: ...you know if someone is saying it just because everyone else is.
> ***GMC***: How?
> ***Charle***s: Cos...
> ***Eddie***: By how they're actually doing.
> ***Charles:*** If they can like back end the set, or like max the last rep, you can tell they're not really hurting (Group Interview Three, 16th July 2018).

Pain and discomfort are therefore both internally felt and externally displayed, and communicated through bodily expressions and vocalisation. Learning how to endure feelings of discomfort and good pain are essential to continued participation in the competitive swimming lifeworld, as well as to one's social acceptance within it. It is to this form of endurance that I now turn.

7.5 Enduring

Competitive swimming training embraces a combination of aerobic and anaerobic work, both of which stress the body in different ways, and the resultant sensations of fatigue, discomfort and pain already described in this chapter are as routine to the swimmers as the sun rising in the morning and setting in the evening. Throughout these training practices, much like endurance runners (see Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2016), the swimmers exhibit mindful, 'habituated action' not just in terms of the repeated actions of training but also in terms of the ability and motivation to sustain those activities session after session, day after day. These sensations therefore become strongly intertwined and interwoven in the process of learning endurance, where a swimmer interprets these various sensations and feelings so as to make them meaningful and over time learns how to act with and through them. These sensations then become familiar and normalised, and experienced athletes such as those in this study know that they are able to continue training despite of them. Novice bodies may not understand that it is possible to continue with such levels of fatigue, but experienced swimmers have over time learnt how to

recognise and tolerate different degrees of fatigue and exhaustion, allowing them to make a more informed decision on what their bodies may or may not be able to do under differing levels of duress. Endurance is thus constructed of both the positive and negative sensations of swimming, and as the competitive swimming body accumulates the necessary somatic experience in relation to habitual tiredness and pain, it affords each athlete the opportunity to formulate strategies to deal with these sensations, and thus develop the confidence to train on and develop further endurance. This point is emphasised by Jean:

> I mean it's mental what we put our bodies through. Like…you go past the point of comfort and it's not even the fact that you are really sore, and you are really struggling, you've got to carry on, you've got, you've just got to work through it. At the end of the day you can't get in and drown. Like you've got, you've got to swim, you've got to keep your body up in the water. Erm, yeah, I think, its pushing, you've got to push through it to get better. It's a bit like DOMS[19] in the gym. They say the best way to get over it is to do more of it. So yeah, it's just physically, yeah, it's awful. It's the worst when you wake up in a morning and [you're] laying in bed and you've not moved yet, you've not done anything, but you are aching. You just lay there looking at the ceiling and your sore. And that's, that's horrible (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Endurance, however, is not just physical. Engaging with the variety, volume, and intensity of training that the swimmers do (7-10 pool sessions equalling 25-100km plus 3-4 gym session per week depending on event) will certainly result in physiological changes that develop physical endurance, but alongside this, the swimmers simultaneously develop an embodied mind with the capacity to endure. The swimmers all spoke of, and understood, that putting themselves through the workload that they do, and the resultant feelings associated with this was simply 'part of what they had to do in order to improve or be the best'. They understood from both a physical and psychological perspective that, as Stephen said earlier, "swimming is a hard sport", where they would be challenged both physically and mentally and overcoming these challenges was just part of the daily journey towards success. A point emphasised by Wade:

> ***Wade***: Yeah, I suppose, I suppose you could say I dislike, it's the ones that are mentally challenging, like the big threshold sets…I remember coming in and we once had like, erm, we came in on a Friday morning and we had a 4k meaty backstroke set, like main set, threshold. It was just, when you're going that

[19] DOMS - Delayed-onset muscle soreness that can be experienced post-exercise.

> pace for so long, doing the same stroke, its physically tiring, its mentally tiring. Yeah, its, it's tough like, really tough…during the middle of it there are points where you just think like, "what am I doing, I literally just want to stop like". I, you get so close to stopping and just getting out, you're basically like, you're, you're saying in your head "I'm just so tired like, I'm just so drained" but like...
> ***GMC***: What keeps you going?
> ***Wade***: I don't know, it's just, I suppose it's the thought of like, it's all benefiting innit. It's all working towards that main goal, being the best. So that's what it is for me anyway. I think, if I can do it, like I reckon if can do this big threshold set, what else, what can't I do, do you know what I mean. That's what I like to think to myself and then, like once you get past halfway during a set, it's like, alright ok I've done it once, I can like, I can do it again and go even faster like. Yeah, I suppose it just like, it's just mental toughness innit. You've got to be really self-motivated, like really like you've got to know what you wanna do. You don't have to know what you want to achieve as much but you've got to have an idea, of what you want to get out of this. You can't just be, I think that's when a lot of people quit, erm, because they are doing these big sets and they don't know why they are doing it. They don't know what they want. But like when I think about it, I want to be the best or the best that I can be. Then, I just think, I've gotta do these aint I. I've gotta do these sessions. I gotta get through them (Wade Interview, 1st November 2017).

Despite this desire to continue to push themselves the swimmers did however understand that some days this just wouldn't be possible, highlighting a highly refined level of self-knowledge in being able to assess one's state of being, and capabilities to endure. In this situation each swimmer had to judge their own limits, and ability to undertake the session as designed, or to simply shut it down and undertake some recovery work or a different session. This happened regularly throughout the observation periods where swimmers would be given the option of different turnaround times or simply swimming easy. This usually happened in agreement with the coaches who wanted the athletes to perform 'quality work' when they were physically and mentally in the right place to do so. This process of self-assessment was, for the majority of the time well received by the coaches and other swimmers, but the option to swim easy or to change paces was only really taken once swimmers had exhausted other options.

Endurance, both cognitively and somatically is therefore developed through lived corporeal experience, and enduring lies at the heart of the competitive swimming lifeworld, not just as a part of the 'doing' of swimming, but also as a central component of athletic consciousness and being-in-the-world. Delineating enduring in this way as 'lived

experience' or as 'endurance work' as coined by Allen-Collinson et al. (2018a), provides the opportunity to investigate the corporeal-cognitive nexus at work in the shaping of an athlete's embodied participation in a physical-cultural practice. The process of enduring therefore becomes, as Allen-Collinson et al. (2018a, p. 1325) note, "an active, agentic, social and reflexive form of work that often requires mindful sense-making". In light of this, it is possible to conceptualise the enduring body as a 'project' that is "worked at and accomplished" (Shilling, 2003, pp. 4-5) via habituated embodied action (Merleau-Ponty, 2005). However, as has been discussed in previous chapters, habit is not an automatic phenomenon, but is a Crossley (2001c, p. 127) notes "an embodied and practical understanding of know-how" grasped and incorporated into one's bodily schema as a tacit and practical 'principle' of action. Under this conceptualisation and in keeping with Merleau-Ponty's (2002) definition of habit and phenomenology's definition of habitus as 'lived through' (Crossley, 2004a, p. 39), the enduring body is therefore never 'complete', and endurance is never permanently acquired (see also section 2.6.1). Endurance, therefore is, as Allen-Collinson et al. (2018a, p. 1329) note, not something that remains sedimented once and for all in the body-mind even for experienced practitioners. A point echoed by the swimmers who highlighted how endurance often has to be re-learnt after periods away from the pool, such as an end of season break or an injury. A point that Jean and Natasha both allude to after each having had an extended break from the sport during sixth form, before returning to the pool at ANP Swimming:

> ***Jean***: So, yeah erm, I had to build my fitness up massively and I think the expectation I put on myself from the start was, not expectation cos there was no expectation in regard to racing and performance but more training wise. Cos like I say I've always performed well in training, and I've always been a hard worker in training. Erm, so when I did start training again, I was knackered like, I was blowing out my arse, and all these people where lapping me, and I was just like "oh my god, why can't I do what I used to do". It took me a while to accept where I was and that I need to build my way back up (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).

> ***Natasha***: So, when I came in September it was like a kick up the arse [laughs]. Cos, I was just so unfit, like, there was like a level of unfit, but I was literally, like dying. I couldn't even finish like a K [1000m], it was so bad, like for the first 3 months…I was just a mixture of mentally and physically drained, cos I was being asked to do something I couldn't, and everyone else just seemed to make it so easily. [I] was often pulled out of sessions being told it wasn't

> good enough[20]…I just remember…being super unfit and we were just doing loads of, like kind of what we did this year, we did fitness for the first few weeks, so everyone was starting to get really good and I would get lapped on like, long-course, like 200 free[style]. I remember just getting lapped. That's all I remember in the first few months. Always being at the back, always getting lapped (Natasha Interview, 26th October 2017; Natasha Follow Up Meeting, 8th February 2018).

Endurance and being able to endure therefore constitute part of a competitive swimmer's 'stock of knowledge' (Schütz, 1967), creating typifications that allow the swimmers to continue to construct, participate in, and make sense of the social world of competitive swimming. The swimmers are able to draw on these typifications, and their own stock of knowledge, to evaluate their team-mates and training partners' enduring. In this way enduring becomes a shared, intersubjective, and social experience done with and between a community of swimmers. Pain and enduring are therefore not merely individual modes of being-in-the-world but are shared by and communicated between swimmers. Bodily discomfort can not only be deemed a sign of improvement but is also about sharing sensory and perceptual feelings with others. The swimmers suffer together, often pushing each other over and beyond what they think they are capable of, and these experiences provide ground for specific forms of belonging that helps constitute the interactional practice of competitive swimming and its lifeworld. As Charles notes:

> If you see someone struggling you can like, you'll give them a bit of like support and then like hopefully they will give it back. But yeah that definitely helps and then, I think the other thing is like the pain's not going to last forever like just give it everything. Especially yesterday, I had this hear-rate set and well there was only me and Ronan doing it, it was, it was bloody hard like, knocking out 100's freestyle long-course, and like we'd just come out of the gym where we'd both been lifting so we were both like hurting but, err, we were just like, proper like getting each other going and like pushing each other to like go faster and faster. So, I think yeah just, just working with other people (Charles Interview, 26th October 2017).

This was not an isolated incident and the swimmers during the group interviews spoke of recognising when others were struggling or needed support. This recognition came as a result of how well they know each other, and how often they train together. In this light, pain, and competitive swimming more generally, thus become intersubjectively and

[20] As a side note Natasha finished the 2017/2018 season ranked 1st in Britain in her main event.

intercorporeally lived. It is this intersubjectivity and intercorporeality that constitute the topic for the final chapter of this thesis, in which the idea of swimming being purely an individual sport is challenged.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined how the experience of various types of pain lies at the heart of the competitive swimming lifeworld, and how the swimmers' willingness and capacity to endure these sensations become a key feature of their embodied swimming knowledge and participation. I began by exploring the various types of painful experience that are relevant to doing competitive swimming, and how the swimmers come to express and understand these differing sensations. As also explored in Chapters 4, 5 & 6, I've shown how these experiences were commensurate with the research findings from other sports where pain and enduring become a marker of improvement leading practitioners to view pain as something productive, and in some cases even comforting, so that the familiarity of being sore was often missed during breaks in the season. I have also discussed how the swimmers would express pain in a socially acceptable way so as not to bring suspicion from others, and how pain and endurance are actively constructed by the swimmers and shared via social interaction. This conceptualisation of pain as 'sensory production' coheres with sociological notions of the active 'social production' of the senses and the sensory, where actors must undertake work in sensory production and interpretation (Allen-Collinson et al., 2018a).

Before moving on to the final chapter of analysis, I would like to underscore, as Howe (2004) did, the value of participant observation in collecting data on the expression of pain as it occurs during practice. By being emplaced in the environment, up close and personal with the swimmers, I was able to catch the fleeting moments in which pain was experienced and expressed in its various formats. Without this level of contact with, and closeness to the swimmers a lot of these nuanced interactions would have been missed. Such transient experiences might simply not have been captured by interviewing alone, possibly due to temporal distance from the experiences of acute good and bad pain. My participation in the field with the swimmers therefore gave me the opportunity to try to understand up close, together with them, their shared experiences of pain.

Chapter 8: The Intersubjective and Intercorporeal Competitive Swimming Lifeworld

> *It's almost like you're using your team-mates so you can stand on their shoulders and get higher (Matthew Interview, 23rd October 2017)*

As indicated in the introduction to this thesis, swimming is regularly referred to as an individual sport. Athletes are often treated as individual units within various coaching texts (e.g. Maglischo, 2003; Olbrecht, 2013) to which various training stresses are applied, and in competition where athletes race against one another and the clock in their own designated lane during pool events, or in a 'bunch' in open water events. Even during what could be described as team events, the relays, swimmers still do individual legs as opposed to a whole team competing together at the same time. As Matthew's quotation above suggests, however, the individual nature of competitive swimming may not necessarily be the case. In this chapter I therefore challenge the conceptualisation of swimming as 'individual' by highlighting how many of the experiences associated with the competitive swimming lifeworld are inherently social, intersubjective, and intercorporeal.

To do so, I draw from the previous three chapters showing how the topics discussed within each of those chapters highlight the intersubjective and intercorporeal nature of the competitive swimming lifeworld. This involves analysing how the learning of skills and technique is social in nature, how the swimming sensorium is shared, and as briefly addressed in the previous chapter, how suffering together is an integral part of performance. Following from this, I will then highlight how important 'significant others' (team-mates, coaches, support staff) are to the production of the competitive swimming lifeworld and ultimately to swimming performance in general.

In Chapter 5, 'Doing' – The skilled practice of swimming, it was highlighted how the swimmers must acclimate to a range of swimming specific techniques of the body in order to inhabit the competitive swimming lifeworld. These included the learning of specific swimming strokes, skills, and techniques as well as the ability to understand the language of competitive swimming. Both these processes are inherently intersubjective. The learning of technique requires social interaction between the swimmer and others, were information is passed from coach to swimmer, swimmer to swimmer, swimmer to support

staff, or vice versa. Wherever possible, swimmers would help each other, be that in terms of offering stroke technique advice, for example, when Frank, a butterfly swimmer was working with Eddie, an individual medley (IM) swimmer, on his butterfly technique, or when the backstroke community (men and women) would get together to work on starts or turns (Fieldnotes, February 2018). In each of these situations the swimmers would utilise one another's differing styles and experiences to help engage in a process of technical improvement, as the following fieldnote reveals:

> The backstroke community then gather to work on their starts. There is Stephen, Wade, Remy, Scott and Pepper all helping to analyse and coach each other. Nick is doing some filming as well to give each of the guys some visual feedback. This shared learning and coaching is great to see as they all genuinely enjoy helping each other and want to see each other improve (Fieldnote, 13th February 2018 AM).

Each of these 'bodies' brings a different background and set of ideas to these interactions, and it is through these interactions and the sharing of information that skills and techniques can be developed. The learning and development of these techniques is therefore intersubjective and intercorporeal, between bodies, and shaped by the various discourses, practices, and social relations that form this lifeworld. This point is emphasised by Crossley (1995a, p. 146 - drawing on Goffman, 1972) who notes how:

> Body techniques are executed in accordance with the others who populate the (intermundane) space of their exercise and the visible (because embodied) intentions, etc. of those others. In this sense we can say that the exercise of body techniques, in actual concrete situations, is dependent upon an intercorporeal nexus: i.e. it is articulated with the behaviour of others.

In addition, Sheets-Johnstone (1994) notes how our moving bodies are foundational to elucidating intersubjectivity. For her, it is the skilled, moving body that serves as the ground for engaging in and developing new skills to participate in a world inhabited by others.

Furthermore, in order for these interactions with others to be meaningful, each of the participants must be versed in the language of the sport or physical culture, which then affords them the opportunity to share the common world. As Merleau-Ponty notes:

> In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground: my thought and his [sic] are inter-woven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the

> state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. We have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behaviour in my transcendental field, nor I in his [sic]; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 413).

Language to Merleau-Ponty thus becomes one key to understanding intersubjectivity because "of all expressive process, speech is able to settle into a sediment and constitute an acquisition for use in human relationships" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 220). In the current case, the focus is on the competitive swimming lifeworld; a world that would not be accessible in the same way to those not versed in the intersubjective and intercorporeal gestures and language of the sport as are its lifeworld inhabitants. Languages, therefore, allow us to understand bodies as both active and acted upon, as speaking and spoken about. As Crossley emphasises, languages:

> …consist in shared rules and resources but the existence of these rules and resources is dependent upon bodies which take them up and use them: bodies which can emit and perceive culturally coded, sense-perceptible, embodied signs. Linguistic communication consists in an intertwining of sensible-sentient bodies (speaker and listener, writer and reader), an intercorporeality (Crossley, 1995b, p. 50).

Bodies are thus woven together in a chiasmic reversibility, in which, together they jointly speak about and understand the manifestation of things in the world (Engelland, 2014). This process is resultant from the interplay of flesh as Csordas (2008, p. 118) notes, drawing on Merleau-Ponty: "speaking is a kind of sonorous touching; language is tissue in the flesh of the world". Thus, to be versed in the language of a world is to be intersubjectively and intercorporeally engaged in that world with others who also know the shared language.

In Chapter 6, 'The Shifted Sensorium of Competitive swimming', I portray a sensory-intersubjectivity that hopefully resonates not only with swimmers but also with a wider sporting and physical cultural readership. I highlight how the swimmers build a two-way embodied relationship with the water, in which their individual corporeality becomes linked to that of others in an intersubjective space. Through this shifted sensorium swimming bodies are able to make corporeal sense of their world, developing a feel for the water through their sensory engagement with it. For Merleau-Ponty, sensory stimulation

is what creates the perceived world, and it is through the engagement with any stimulus, be that another human being, the environment, or a piece of clothing that experience becomes possible.

It is through these various sensations and sensory experiences that the swimmers build a sensory knowledge of the 'water'. Much in the same way that rock climbers do with the 'rock' (Jenkings, 2013, 2017), the swimmers engage with the water, by touching and being touched by it, which provides information that the swimmers can use in order to assess their continued interaction with the water. Information, for example, in relation to temperature, can then be shared both verbally and non-verbally with training partners. Additionally, it must be remembered that water is not a stable environment, and can also metaphorically 'speak to' the swimmers. Changes in temperature, chlorine levels, or the number of bodies in the water all bring with them different affordances (Gibson, 1979/1986) of what is and is not possible. For example, raised levels of chlorine for a swimmer with asthma may raise the risk of inducing an asthma attack. The ability to understand these subtle changes, and their potential impact upon performance makes up part of the swimmers' sensory expertise. As Merleau-Ponty (1968, p. 136) notes in the chapter entitled *Chiasm*; "once a body-world relationship is recognised, there is a ramification of my body and a ramification of the world and a correspondence between its inside and my outside, between my inside and its outside".

In Chapter 7, 'Discomfort, Pain and Enduring', I briefly highlighted the intersubjective nature of suffering and endurance, where the swimmers work together to tolerate and go beyond the levels of pain that in everyday life would most likely cause a cessation of activity. This desire to work and suffer together was something that was evident throughout the periods of observation and interviews, and the following fieldnote highlights how the swimmers would work together to help each other, particularly when a team-mate was struggling:

> Again, it's clear that these guys are in this together all the way. Eddie although starting the main set strongly began to suffer with cramp early in the set. Scott, however, working next to him, was always giving him a "come on" or "let's go this combination this time and see if that's easier" as they were working on different individual medley combinations during the set. Working

> together, sharing each other's trials and tribulations as well as successes (Fieldnote, 24th January 2018 PM).

I asked the swimmers during the group interviews that closed my data collection explicitly to identify how they could recognise when others were having a bad day or needed some form of encouragement. Their responses indicated a fine, nuanced attunement to each other, so that it depended on the swimmer in question and the situation. On some occasions swimmers would simply tell each other that they "are dying" or "are fucked", whereas on other occasions they may act out of character; for example, occupying a different place within the lane to normal; or their breathing may become more laborious than usual; or they display facial expressions including a vacant stare or grimacing; or their body language might display a negative 'tone' i.e. their head and shoulders might 'drop'; or their times might start to become slower. These utterances, gestures, and expressions, all of which are laced with insider knowledge, are often received and interpreted through an 'interrogatory glance' (Sudnow, 1972) towards a training partner. These glances often then brought forth some form of encouragement from another member of the team, be that a simple "come-on" or a "try and stick with me". In certain situations, however, a swimmer may simply be left alone as that would be what worked best for that individual athlete. The swimmers have therefore gradually built a knowledge of each other over time that allows them to attune to one another in a form of 'collective resonance' (Ingold, 1993). As Carol and Jessica emphasise:

> ***Carol***: …I feel like, especially the people that you train with in a lane every day, you see it and you notice it [suffering] and you know how they react to it [giving encouragement] when you've done it previously. So, you kind of learn from their experience and your own experience. But sometimes generally they might just need a little bit of a pick up, so I think aww well I'll boost them up a little, but sometimes I just think aww don't, don't bother.
> ***Jessica***: Yeah, it's like Susan for example, if she's in a bad mood, and she is doing bad there is literally nothing you can say (laughs) that would help like, would want to make her swim faster. So, you just gotta leave her, and that's the best way to deal with that.
> ***Carol***: It depends on the individual (Group Interview One, 9th July 2018)

The swimmers have therefore created a specific corporeal comprehension of each other, via the significant number of hours spent together in the swimming lifeworld, and which formed what Schütz (1967) termed the 'stock of knowledge at hand'. This knowledge is

then used to construct a variety of athletic typifications based on the corporeal characteristics that each of their team-mates display. They have become highly *attuned* (Ingold, 2000) to each other's corporeal responses, for example, to heightening levels of pain, and should someone deviate from their 'normal' characteristic mode of being, a reaction was drawn. In this situation, however, the swimmers are not necessarily consciously reflecting on the situation but are reacting to each other, to each other's bodies, at a pre-reflective level. They understand via a form of 'somatic empathy' (Allen-Collinson, Owton, & Crust, 2016) the suffering that their training partners are experiencing because they too have experienced it. This 'practical lived empathy' (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2017) between the swimmers allows for a pre-reflective intercorporeal identification of bodily states, via which the swimmers reported that they could come to understand the feelings and intentions of others, for example, frustration.

Additionally, in a situation where a fellow team-mate was struggling or having an 'off day', there was never any indication of animosity of negative comments towards said team-mate. The understanding and maturity of senior swimmers to recognise that it could be them in this situation in a few days' time seemingly provided another level of intersubjective understanding and somatic empathy.

As each of these previous chapters have shown, intersubjective and intercorporeal experiences are key elements of the swimming lifeworld. In addition to the above examples, the swimmers also paid particular attention to the importance of their team-mates in various facets of the training environment. The role of team-mates was celebrated in many different ways by the swimmers during interviews and it was evident during the three periods of observation conducted just how tightly knit and cohesive the various groups were. The swimmers often spoke of the positive impact of co-presence - having team-mates present during training, and how they felt that they wouldn't be able to do what they did if they weren't doing it with others. As Bruce notes:

> …something that you don't really experience in age group swimming, is when you're all doing a set together and you're all dying on your arse, you all say "come on lads lets, lets fucking have this", you get people saying "let's do this guys", and you get the girls saying "come on lads", and the boys are like "come on girls". Even when the breaststrokers are doing a really hard set, we will

> always be cheering them on and they will be cheering us on and you're in the middle of a set and people just saying, "come on let's fucking go here" that helps a lot. And I think a lot of other people would say that as well. It helps a lot more than people, like, from the outside looking in would think, they would be like it's just a "oh come on" but like if someone else is saying "fucking come on then" that sort of to me it's like well their going to die in a minute as well so, it's not just me and if they can do it, I can do it (Bruce Interview, 4th October 2017).

Bruce's point was echoed by other swimmers including Stephen and Wade who further emphasise the role of team-mates in the training pool helping to push others on to greater performances. Stephen additionally alludes to one of the sub-groups present within the larger training groups at ANP Swimming, 'the backstroke group'. There were several such sub-groups, often based on the stroke and event that individual swimmers specialised in (e.g. 50m sprinters, individual medley swimmers, breaststrokers). Although these groups are groups within a group, their membership was never a closed affair. Swimmers from other groups could find themselves working within, or with athletes from anyone of these groups depending on the nature of the session, or what the coaches had discussed with various athletes in terms of their immediate needs. For example, an athlete just returning to the water from injury may have been a backstroker but would swim with whichever group was swimming the session best-suited to their recovery. The importance of these sub-groups emerged as salient:

> ***Stephen***: …having people, for a hard session you need that. For an easy session, I can go by myself and think about technique. But for hard sessions you, you can't train by yourself…You have to have people around… If I did that set by myself now, I'd be a lot slower, a lot slower, probably swim a lower effort as well…But erm, I think it works the same for, like I was saying to Wade the other day, so we did…a rock-hard set. It was like, 4x50s blue, 2x100 blue, 4x50s blue, 200 purple, 3 times…long course, like rock hard. So, I got in my zone, I was swimming efficient, my last 200 I beat all the freestylers, on backstroke. I went 2:07 long at end of that like set. So, I think that's going off the point and just bragging a bit [laughs] but, then...if I'm not there going 2:07, he's [Wade] not going, he doesn't drop to 2:13. He stays at 2:19 because that is a very good time to be going in that set but because you've got someone else going something stupid it sort of raises the bar and pulls him up. Like we were having this conversation the other day. He likes having me there, as a target because back at his old club there was no-one there to swim up to.
> ***GMC***: So, it's brought, both of you have come together and raised each other's game?

Stephen: Yeah, it's good for me, because if they start getting, there's days when I'm struggling, and they'll be pushing me, and I'll have to raise my game to stay ahead. It's, I think it's really good to have them like and I think it's the same for them. It's definitely good to have a little backstroke group. Then just the team generally. Like you might not get on with everyone but it's a bit like a family, I guess. You wouldn't be able, there is no chance you would be able to do the metres without everyone there just going through it [with you]. It just wouldn't work (Stephen Interview, 17th October 2017).

GMC: Do your team-mates play a role?
Wade: Oh yeah 100 percent. Yeah, when like if, I mean, especially us backstroke boys, we do all the sessions together, so like if one of us is struggling we obviously give each other a word. It's not even anything big it's just a little "come on" like, "not long left" like, do you know what I mean? And then that will just give you like a little bit of a "yeah, ok, this is alright, we can do it", do you know what I mean? It's like, it's just a little pick-up. Like when other people are in your ear saying, "come on we can do this, not long like, one more round", stuff like that, it just, it gives you like a little bit of a boost.
GMC: So, a big part of training I guess is having team-mates around you, because swimming is technically an individual sport, but you spent the majority if not more of it training with a team than racing on your own so...
Wade: So, it's sort of like, training is like as a team, it's like a team sport when you are training (Wade Interview, 1st November 2018).

This camaraderie and desire to push each other on wasn't just evident from the male swimmers. Several of the female swimmers also spoke of the positive role that other swimmers and members of the team played in their development and continued engagement in the sport:

Jean: …Such a good feeling, yeah, yeah, it's an amazing feeling. Cos, I think when you're in an environment where you enjoy being with the people that you are around as well, when you've done a good session but everyone else around you has done a good session, you're not just happy for yourself and proud of yourself, you're proud of everyone else in the team that you're involved with. Erm, so yeah, I just think it's a great environment. And yeah that definitely helps…Having everyone swim well and everyone perform and, in such a big group it is, it is electric, really, it's such a good environment (Jean Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Hope: Yeah, I like people around me. I feel like, it, it just makes me happy with people being around me, like I talk quite a lot, so I like, I just like to talk to people and like have a good time. Like I don't think I'd enjoy it as much if it was just 1 person per lane. I like to have people around me and like motivate me and push me on in sets. Err, yeah…people do see it as just an individual sport but that's only when you're behind that block and you're doing it, well for yourself, but you've got your team behind you. Everyone's helped get you

> to that point and it will be a mix of, like, your nutritionist, your coach, your family like everyone like your team-mates, about how you swim. I don't think it's just yourself, everyone plays a part in it (Hope Interview, 16th October 2017).

Each of these examples demonstrates how the training environment is a shared, intersubjective and intercorporeal space, where body-minds work together, pushing each other on to what are hoped to be bigger and better things. But the question arises as to why the swimmers would do this. Why would they work together if the sport is inherently individual and highly competitive? The following data extracts, firstly from Logan, and then from Bruce and Matthew, eloquently delineate the importance of shared lived experience and lifeworld occupancy:

> ***Logan***: …we've been through those hard sessions together and it just brings everyone really close and it's just sort of, it's definitely a unique, unique relationship with your team-mates (Group Interview Two, 10th July 2018).

> ***Bruce***: If you are not going to give it 110% you might as well not bother. That's like one thing that you come to understand in the group is that like, if you are going flat out, then they are going to be going flat out and you're sort of, like Logan said, you are bonded by the pain almost in that way.
> ***Matthew***: It's odd cos you don't want to rely on them, but you can almost always depend on them. Do you know what I mean? Like I don't want to rely on these guys cos I feel like I want to rely on myself, I want to do it for myself, but I know I can depend on them cos they will always step up. That's quite cool. I feel like cos we are all passionate about what we do there's just a level of understanding that we are going to give that 110% most time, and that's pretty sick to know that like your surrounding swimming family is going to commit that, and he knows I'm going to, and she knows I'm going to, we know that we both are simultaneously [going to]. That's pretty cool.
> ***Bruce***: But you don't really talk to anyone about it though. It's kind of a given really. It's a mutual, unwritten understanding (Group Interview Two, 10th July 2018).

As Bruce and Matthew allude to here, the swimmers also felt a collective intersubjective responsibility to each other to be there and to swim well. This responsibility was even taken to the point where certain swimmers felt like they were letting team mates down if they themselves were having a bad day and unable to push on and encourage others, as Eddie notes:

> …recently I'd been training pretty awfully, and last year I was training pretty bad for a bit, and I feel worse for the person I'm training with…[because] me

> not doing well also means that they can't do as well as what they think, because I feel like I need to push them (Eddie Interview, 2nd November 2017).

Furthermore, the swimmers also share in each other's success, and enjoy when they perform well as a team. This point was made by Jessica in the aftermath of a particularly tough session that was undertaken by the team as a whole, but which was made even more challenging for her and Susan:

> Yeah that's what's great, like. You, you're just as proud, I mean I was proud of myself, but I was just as proud of everyone. I mean you feel so much love towards everyone else because you understand that they have worked so hard in that set and it's not easy and you just have so much respect for the other swimmers because you've all gone through it together. And I was thinking halfway through as well, I was like Susan is doing the same as me and I was thinking you have to be crazy to put yourself through this. I was thinking "what am I doing?", like who enjoys putting themselves through this much pain. But then when you finish that sense of achievement is so much stronger when you've worked hard for it (Jessica Interview, 30th October 2017).

These types of shared lived experience, along with the swimmers' understanding of each other, brought the swimmers closer together into a tightly-knit cohesive group and suggests that our existence in relations to others can be deeply corporeal (Csordas, 2008). The language, gestures, sensory experiences, and cultural norms of swimming are all constituents of the intercorporeal milieu of the competitive swimming lifeworld and being versed in these constituents provides the swimmers with access to, as well as shaping their experience of, said lifeworld at a corporeal level. The swimmers have thus created "a community of Egos existing with each other and for each other…which, moreover (in its communalized intentionality) constitutes the *one identical world*" (Husserl, 1960, p. 107, emphasis in original). Swimming body-minds are situated in relation to one another within this world where they learn from one another, shape each other's experience, and in doing so connect to one another at an intersubjective and deeply intercorporeal level. Having observed these behaviours and given the swimmers the opportunity to speak of the importance of team-mates in their individual interviews, I decided to play a little devil's advocate with them in the final group interviews. I first raised the idea of swimming being a project of self-development, which they agreed with, before then asking them if they still felt like they trained together as a team, or as a group of individuals who simply train at the same time. Their responses are as follows:

> ***Carol***: I think we see ourselves as a different breed so that's why we see ourselves as being a collective. Like we are all swimmers, so I feel like then you automatically collect yourself in that group. But yeah, within that group you are all individuals like chasing a time or something, but I don't see it as an individual sport because I am with a team, as a collective bunch of swimmers (Group Interview One, 9th July 2018).
>
> ***Hope***: Everyone has their own individual focuses don't you, but you are a team and we are all sharing like similar journeys. Everyone has different goals, but we are all trying to get to that [same] place.
> ***Matthew***: There is a distinction between individuality and community erm, but everyone in a community needs to be an individual, and if they're not you're just a gang or something, or a cult...(laughter)
> ***Bruce***: A herd of savages (inaudible/laughter)
> ***GMC***: Yeah, a cult might be the correct term,
> ***Matthew***: ...and no-one likes a cult, so you have to be individuals that can survive on your own for quite a long period of time, but when you go back to your community you are beneficial to your community and I think that's what a team is (Group Interview Two, 10th July 2018).
>
> ***Stephen***: Yeah, cos everyone has the same goal of getting, everyone wants to be a better swimmer themselves, so we all share that and bounce off each other…its good (Group Interview Three, 16th July 2018).

What each of the examples portrayed in this chapter illuminate is how the swimming lifeworld and the experiences of the swimmers are intersubjective and intercorporeal, constructed through collaboration, social interaction, and dialogue. In such a construction Merleau-Ponty's notion of reversibility that posits how we are both sentient and sensible (including how we can see and be seen; touch and be touched) becomes salient in highlighting how we are not locked into our own private worlds, but we are in-the-world, a world that is shared by all (Crossley, 1995b). The swimmers' bodies thus assume an embodied, cultural, visible form, which draws upon common social praxes in the creation of a human interworld, linked by thoughts, feelings, intentions and actions. As body-subjects we therefore inhabit what Merleau-Ponty (1968) deemed an 'intermundane space' *(l'intermonde)* in which we become intersubjectively intertwined with other beings. Embodied being and world therefore co-exist and as Merleau-Ponty (2002, p. 530) writes "man [sic] is but a network of relationships and these alone matter to him". Intercorporeality as a concept thus emphasises the social nature of the (swimming) body and the bodily nature of social relationships.

In closing this chapter, I would like to make two further points. First, up to this point, this chapter has dealt solely with the intercorporeal nature of the embodied experiences of the swimmers under investigation. However, I would also highlight the intercorporeal nature of the relationship with the swimmers that I was able to build over the time I spent with them. The impact of intersubjective, embodied interactions became more and more evident as I progressed throughout the three periods of observation. These interactions provided many interesting, if sometimes challenging situations; from sharing the highs and post training euphoria of sessions where the swimmers performed above their own and their coaches' expectations, to the lows of swimmers being disciplined for breaking team rules. Each of these situations brought forth different emotions and feelings to reflect upon in my own notes. Ultimately, however, it was these interactions and my ability to engage with the swimmers in a familiar lifeworld, formulating my own shared 'collective resonance' (Ingold, 1993), that led me to build the levels of trust and rapport needed to allow me to share their lifeworld, although never completely, and bring their stories to life.

Finally, I would just like to use one final note taken from a discussion that Nick and I had one day regarding group and team dynamics where Nick expressed the idea that:

> It's not always about having the best swimmers together in a group. Often the best groups are made of both 'medal winners' and 'medal makers' (Nick; Fieldnotes, 13th October 2017).

For me, this neatly encapsulates the odd nature of competitive swimming in that it is still categorised as an individual sport, where you do race on your own in a designated space against a clock and sometimes against your team mates, but those very same team mates and training partners play an integral part in any swimmer's success. It is these shared moments in training where swimmers are pushed along by team-mates, or when team-mates pick each other up on a bad day, or when they complete a gruelling session or week together that make the competitive swimming lifeworld first and foremost shared, social, collaborative - intercorporeal. As Weiss (1999, p. 5) notes "the experience of being embodied is never a private affair but is always mediated by our continual interactions with other human and non-human bodies".

Chapter 9: Conclusion – 'The Swim Down'

This thesis has engaged with a sociologised version of phenomenology to study in-depth the competitive swimming lifeworld. I have shown how sociological-phenomenology provides a robust framework from which to conduct an investigation into the embodied experiences of the swimmers involved, and have sought to avoid undue abstraction and theorisation by using the participants' voices to allow me to construct the narrative to describe and illuminate the feeling, sensing, moving, intersubjective and intercorporeal swimming body: what Allen-Collinson and Leledaki (2015) refer to as their 'corpo-reality'. In so doing, I have sought to remain true to the phenomenological ethos of this thesis by providing detailed, grounded, descriptions of concrete phenomena as lived by the participants in their specific lifeworld.

In this final chapter, I discuss the key findings in relation to the aims and research questions that guided this project. I also examine the contribution of this study to the social-scientific study of competitive swimming, and the growing body of literature on the (carnal) sociology of the (sporting) body. Finally, I discuss some of the limitations of the project, both theoretically and methodologically, and potential avenues for future research. This chapter thus constitutes what is known in swimming as the 'swim down': a small block of swimming and/or 'social kick' that occurs at the end of the session, providing the swimmers with an opportunity to reawaken mind and body, returning them to a state of post-training normality, all be it with the effects of that training session banked, and hopefully having had a positive effect on the swimmer.

9.1 Contributions to Knowledge

Throughout this thesis I have argued that phenomenology, with its focus on the mind-body-world linkage and particularly the existential phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, and his concepts of habit, reversibility, and intercorporeality, are of significant analytical relevance to studying the evolving, dynamic, and sensory nature of embodiment. I have also shown how supplementing Merleau-Ponty's form of phenomenology with other sociological, anthropological, and phenomenologically inspired approaches and conceptualisations such as Mauss' (1979) 'body techniques', Crossley's (2004a) 'reflexive body techniques', Leder's

(1990) ‘dis- and dys-appearning body’ and Schütz’s (1967) notions of ‘typifications’ and the ‘stock of knowledge’ can provide further analytical insight in a study of this nature, which focuses upon embodiment in the physical culture of competitive swimming.

In Chapter 4, I examined the embodied journeys of the swimmers and their motivations for engaging and continuing to engage with the sport of competitive swimming. I showed how, for many of the swimmers, their engagement commenced via influence from family members, and how their respective journeys to ANP Swimming were often far from smooth. Instead, such journeys involved challenges, successes, failures, and changes of clubs or coaches. Chapter 4 also illuminated how the competitive swimming lifeworld is not a lifeworld that is open to everyone, nor is it a lifeworld of which everyone desires to be a part. It is a demanding lifeworld where swimmers can complete anywhere up to and beyond 100 kilometres of swimming per week, alongside additional land-based training that includes gym and (p)rehabilitation work. Competitive swimming thus becomes what Gillespe et al. (2002) refer to as a “greedy avocation”. Despite this, the swimmers spoke of their love for the sport and their desire to push the limits of their own corporeality in the pursuit of athletic success. This position resonates with other sport and physical cultures, including triathlon (Atkinson, 2008a), mixed martial arts (Andreasson & Johansson, 2019) ultrarunning (Hanold, 2010) and marathon swimming (Throsby, 2016), for example, where athletes look to train through, and triumph over, fatigue and pain in order to go faster and harder for longer.

Chapter 4 additionally drew attention to how feelings of self-doubt and perfectionism are often commonplace in the competitive swimming lifeworld. I argue, in agreement with Greenspon (2000) that perfectionism constitutes not a particular set of [psychological] behaviours, but is an intersubjectively created phenomenon born out of interaction, grounded not only in the swimmers’ personal experiences, but also in their wider socio-cultural backgrounds, and the characteristics of the competitive swimming lifeworld. These interactions and the relationships they have built during their time in competitive swimming then influence their behaviours and bring forth certain performance anxieties.

Finally, Chapter 4 highlighted how, through their active participation in this lifeworld, the lifeworld 'acts back' upon the swimmers, giving rise to a salient swimming identity. This identity is fundamentally grounded in what they do and is written on their bodies in the form of lean(ish), broad shouldered, muscular physiques, often topped with a nest of chlorine bleached unkempt hair, highlighting again the link between mind-body-world. For most of these swimmers, they *are* competitive swimmers, whether they are in the pool or out of it.

In Chapter 5, I examined the complex, dynamic and evolving nature of 'doing' competitive swimming, demonstrating how the swimming body-mind is constantly crafted through engagement with a variety of training practices that physically shape the swimming body. I have shown how, in order to inhabit the competitive swimming lifeworld, swimmers must acclimate to a variety of swimming-specific body techniques (Mauss, 1979), often undertaken through a process of mindful-swimming, which is also reflective of the phenomenological focus on mind-body linkage. Merleau-Ponty's (2002) concept of 'habit', along with Leder's (1990) 'dys-appearing' and Zeiler's (2010) 'eu-appearing' body, allowed for further analytic investigation of these embodied techniques, and how they are incorporated into a swimmer's body-schema and refined through 'somatic attunement' (Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2014), experience, and an active relationship with the aquatic environment.

Further to this, and with particularly reference to the use of training aids (paddles, fins, parachute), the data explored in Chapter 5 also adds weight to Merleau-Ponty's (2002) concept of body auxiliaries by highlighting how these various pieces of equipment become incorporated into swimmers' body-schema. Additionally, the phenomenological concept of habitus, as defined by Crossley (2004a, p. 39) as a "lived-through structure-in-process, constantly evolving as an effect of the interactions of the agent or group with both others and their physical environment", was also shown to be relevant to the swimming lifeworld, including the need for the swimmers to learn and use a specific swimming language. The contingent and temporal nature of habit also emerged clearly, indicating how all of these skills and abilities have a temporality: they can be developed, and they can also degrade.

Chapter 5 therefore contributed to, and takes forward, existing literature on skill and enskillment by highlighting how the process of 'doing' competitive swimming is a complex, cyclical phenomenon that demands practical experimentation, discovery, and the ability constantly to adjust and adapt depending on the practice and context. The competitive swimming context is one that provides rich empirical data to conceptualise and demonstrate how knowing and doing are both fundamentally entwined, and also socio-culturally shaped, with the body playing a central role in our being-in-the-world.

Chapter 6 explored the 'shifted sensorium' of competitive swimming in order to understand in more depth the sensory information that facilitated 'doing', and the various sensory transformations that arose via the swimmers' active 'doing'. Particular attention was paid to the haptic dimension of the swimming sensorium, and I also highlighted how the conceptualisations of thermoception as both a form of touch (Geurts, 2002) and a distinct sense (Potter, 2008) are relevant in the case of competitive swimming. This extends the work of phenomenological sociologists who have explored and theorised 'lived heat', thermoception and thermoregulation in other physical cultures such as distance running, triathlon, boxing, and martial arts (see for example:Allen-Collinson & Owton, 2015; Allen-Collinson et al., 2018c; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2019). Additionally, I highlighted how the somatic senses of kinaesthesia and proprioception are fundamental to a swimmer's understanding of her/his body in an aquatic environment, and also, importantly, how these somatic senses can be thrown 'out of sync', requiring the use of vision to calibrate the link between somatic sensation and actual movement. Vision thus becomes an active part of the swimmer's 'doing'. Such a position highlights competitive swimmers' use of a highly skilled form of vision or 'swimming vision' specifically attuned to seeing elements of swimming technique that might be imperceptible, or unrecognisable to the untrained eye. But this position and use of skilled swimming vision does not prioritise vision over the other senses. It is only in combination with, and when needed, that vision plays a role with the somatic or haptic senses. A position that enforces a shifting away from visual sensation as the predominant sensation in Western notions of the sensorium, as well as adding weight to the notion of our sensing in 'synaesthesia', where different vectors of sensory perception intertwine with other elements of the sensorium.

Chapter 6, also drew attention to the felt, somatic sense of 'inner time' or 'durée' and how the swimmers were able to understand different swimming times/paces through their own embodied efforts, *bodily labour* (Wacquant, 1995, p. 67) and corporeal ways of knowing, extending the notion of time beyond a simple quantifiable measurement to become linked to an individual's emotions, sensations, and perceptions (Melucci, 1996). Such a finely tuned system can, however, be thrown 'out of sync' during periods out of the water thus highlighting durée's mutability.

In bringing forward and analysing the sensorium in this way, Chapter 6 additionally highlighted how the senses and the sensorium are fluid and evolutionary in nature. They are not restricted to the classic five-sense model that has dominated much of Western thought since Aristotle but are instead wide-ranging and context specific. For example, the sensorium used to negotiate the competitive swimming lifeworld would be different from that of a rugby lifeworld. In rugby, the role of vision and sound are likely to feature more prominently to help players co-ordinate with team-mates, or to spot weaknesses in an opponent's defensive structure. In this case the data indicated that the environment of the swimming pool significantly altered the sensory orientation of the participants, as well as to some degree my own, heightening different senses such as the haptic, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive. Experienced swimmers thus develop certain senses, a 'shifted sensorium', in specific ways that differ from those outside of the swimming lifeworld. Such a position therefore aligns the findings of this study with sociological and anthropological conceptualisations of the sensorium as lived through culture and laden with socio-cultural significance.

In Chapter 7, I continued with the sensory theme but shifted attention to how discomfort, pain and specific forms of endurance are developed through practice, experience, and interaction with others. I described the various types of painful experience that are relevant to doing competitive swimming, and how those engaged in swimming often utilise these experiences as markers towards a potential improvement in performance. This conceptualisation of pain as positive is similar to research findings from other sports and physical cultures (see for example: Hanold, 2010; Howe, 2004; Throsby, 2016) where practitioners would view certain types of pain as positive, and in some cases even

comforting. This understanding of pain has been socialised into the swimmers through their embodied practices and is shared and communicated via social interaction. The current findings add weight to the notion that not all pain in sport is necessarily associated with injury, and that forms of pain can be conceptualised as both good and bad and utilised as a learning experience. Pain is therefore explained differently according to context and meaning, as something that is paradoxically productive and yet simultaneously something that needs to be resisted, suppressed, and overcome.

Further to this, Chapter 7 also highlighted how the ability to endure these experiences is a product of habituated embodied action, where swimmers learn to normalise, and to continue to train through these elevated levels of bodily discomfort, both physical and mental. Endurance is thus developed cognitively and somatically through lived corporeal experience. Endurance and enduring thus draws upon and adds to the swimmers 'stock of knowledge' (Schütz, 1967) allowing the swimmers to continue to swim, participate in, and make sense of the competitive swimming lifeworld.

Sociological-phenomenology not only generates insight into sporting embodiment and experience in general, as portrayed in Chapters 4 through 7, but it also emphasizes the importance of, and provides a powerful means of examining, intersubjectivity and intercorporeality: the ways in which our minds and bodies share the world, interact and socially relate to other human beings, as demonstrated in Chapter 8.

In Chapter 8, phenomenologically-inspired perspectives on intersubjectivity and intercorporeality are employed to challenge the notion of swimming being predominately an individual sport as noted in a variety of swimming coaching texts where athletes are often considered as individual units around which training plans are built and applied (e.g. Maglischo, 2003; Olbrecht, 2013). Additionally, in sociological discourse there have been a number of articles that focus on the negative individual experiences of training regimes and coach-athlete relationships (e.g. McMahon & Barker-Ruchti, 2017; McMahon & Dinan-Thompson, 2008; McMahon & Penney, 2013a). Further to this Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009, p. 6) focus on swimming in their study due to it being an individual sport which allows them to "limit some of the compounding factors associated with team sports" again

signalling swimming's supposed individuality. However, by highlighting the intersubjective and intercorporeal nature of the embodied experiences reported in Chapters 4 through 7, and adding additional information in relation to the role of team-mates, coaches, and my own experiences with the swimmers, Chapter 8 challenges this position and portrays how the swimming lifeworld isn't as individual as these authors make out but is constructed through social interaction, collaboration, and dialogue with others. Chapter 8 thus contributes to a growing body of work that addresses sporting intersubjectivity and intercorporeality in a variety of physical-cultural domains, for example in the pugilistic and (mixed) martial arts (Jennings, 2013; Spencer, 2012b; Vaittinen, 2014; Wacquant, 2004), (sport) dancing (Purser, 2017; Ravn, 2016a) and distance running (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2017).

As a result of these original findings, this study offers a unique contribution to the academic study of competitive swimming, with a particular focus on *training*, by highlighting the importance of practical embodied knowledge in understanding swimmers, as "sensate, suffering, skilled, sedimented, and situated creature[s] of flesh and blood" (Wacquant 2015, p. 1). Additionally, there is a growing optimism that ethnographies such as the current study, which utilise sociological-phenomenology to investigate the living, sensing, and skilled sporting body provide a way of advancing Merleau-Ponty's (1964) project of bringing Western philosophical thought 'down to earth', by focusing on the lived human body. Such a position has the potential to open up avenues for future research into a variety of different social and physical cultures where experiential forms of knowledge are particularly central. In doing so, sociological-phenomenology opens the door to systematic, empirical analyses that are grounded in the lived, corporeal experiences of those who partake in these lifeworlds, thus developing a greater understanding of the situated dynamics of these social settings. This study therefore contributes to a growing body of literature that addresses the sociology of the (sporting) body, by utilising a sociological-phenomenological approach to develop a more corporeally grounded, carnal understanding of the lived embodied experiences of the competitive swimming lifeworld. The findings of this study thus offer insight into the dynamic and evolving nature of doing competitive swimming, the competitive swimming sensorium, as well as the intersubjective and intercorporeal nature of competitive swimming.

Finally, by engaging with and addressing lived experience and the sensory aspects of sporting experience, I have built upon the knowledge already available in these fields, as well as providing opportunities for others to build upon the knowledge generated from this study. It is only through this continued connection of empirical data to theory, from similar or different sporting lifeworlds that we can truly begin to understand the specifics of how people play across a range of sports, and how our embodied experiences are a fundamental part of this continued participation. I have therefore sought to contribute new insights to sociological debates both within, and beyond, the sociology of the body, particularly the need to illuminate and theorise the interconnection between material body, mind, and environment in relation to social actors' 'corpo-reality' or 'being-in-the-world'. As Williams and Bendelow (1998, p. 3) argue, only on this basis "can a truly embodied sociology have any real hope of putting minds back into bodies, bodies back into society and society back into the body".

Despite the strengths of using sociological-phenomenology in undertaking a study of this nature, I am not suggesting that it is the only way to do so, nor am I suggesting that sociological-phenomenology is without its limitations (see following section), but as this study shows, sociological-phenomenology's insistence on taking seriously and remaining faithful to the phenomena portrayed in participants' own experiential accounts, grounded in the material-corporeal body provides a potent analytical framework (Allen-Collinson, 2011a), which can generate insight into, and empathic resonance with, social actors and their various lifeworlds.

9.2 Reflections on Theory, Methodology, and Avenues for Future Research

The following section illuminates some of the theoretical and methodological limitations of this study as well as highlighting possible avenues for future research.

9.2.1 Theoretical Limitations

As Allen-Collinson (2016) notes, phenomenology, both theoretical and methodological, provides an effective lens through which to bring fresh insights to the analysis of lived (sporting) experience. Rich phenomenological descriptions and analysis can promote a re-consideration of the 'essential' structures of sporting experience (e.g. the corporeal,

sensory, emotional), helping us to question the often taken-for-granted, mundane, and also scientific 'habits of (sporting) thought', in order to arrive at an empathic understanding of what it actually *feels* like to be a swimming, fighting, dancing, or any other sporting body.

Traditional philosophical phenomenology, despite its strengths has, however, been criticised by some sociologists (e.g. Howson & Inglis, 2001; Shilling, 2012). Principal criticisms focus upon the tendency for such approaches to be 'universalistic', failing to take into account difference, and for neglecting the influence of power and other social structural forces upon individuals, interactions, and relationships (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015). To counter these short-comings other sociologists (and other social scientists) who have utilised the phenomenological approach have drawn on more sociologised or social forms of phenomenology, including socio-structural theoretical perspectives, in order to "address the structurally, politically and ideologically influenced, historically specific and socially situated nature of human embodiment and experience" (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2011, p. 332).

Despite this development, however, there are, inevitably, criticisms that have been levelled at sociological-phenomenology and social phenomenology more generally; for example, Kim and Beard (2009) highlight how despite laying the foundations for a phenomenology of social life, Schütz fails to show how to operationalise it for use in empirical studies. Crossley (1996, p. 98) notes additionally how Schütz tends to adopt an 'individualist' perspective, ignoring the 'big worlds' of global communication and therefore loses sight of the way "the community itself functions as a system, perpetuating itself through space and time". Conversely, however, Overgaard and Zahavi (2009) counter this argument in noting how to phenomenologists society cannot be reduced to the sum of its individual members, and for society to be social it must involve individual subjects standing in various interpersonal relationships to one another.

Furthermore, other critics have claimed that Schütz's social phenomenology is conservative as it does not challenge notions of inequality or unjust social order (Crossley, 1996). The stock of common-sense knowledge risks humans understanding each other's actions as being regular and ordered patterns of social life. Such a position thus creates the illusion

that there is stability and order in society, when in reality society is more a collection of individual experiences interwoven together in no clear shape or form (Haralambos & Holbron, 2013). Overgaard and Zahavi (2009) maintain, however, that this criticism was largely pre-empted by phenomenology. As Schütz himself stresses, a sociological phenomenologist's *raison d'etre* is to observe and report on the phenomena they are examining. Producing such a report does not necessarily legitimise what is happening but illuminates a phenomenon in its most concrete form. This position in turn could then lead to any inequality or unjust social order being challenged. In other words, by understanding what is actually happening, we are in a better position to make a more critical assessment of a phenomenon and if change is therefore needed.

Finally, Schütz's sociological-phenomenology can certainly be read as embodied, but Schütz does not accord the body any specific attention. However, by drawing from Schütz in combination with Merleau-Ponty, and other phenomenologically inspired writers and analyses we can strengthen this empirical form of phenomenology. Sociological-phenomenology then allows us to take a view of (sporting) experience that illuminates our corporeally grounded experiences, as well as providing us with a potent means of situating these experiences within wider social structures, emphasising the ways in which embodied experience is lived within and through social, cultural and historical structures. The embodied, somatic knowledge illuminated in this thesis has thus allowed me to describe the experience of being a competitive swimmer, and to theorise "from the body" as well as about the body (Williams & Bendelow, 1998), thus helping to remedy the imbalance between abstract accounts of the body and more grounded, 'bodyful' accounts of lived sporting experience (Allen-Collinson, 2011b). By doing so, I hope to have also generated a feeling of understanding in the reader, thus linking the embodiment of the researched, the researcher and the reader.

9.2.2 Methodological Limitations

When choosing to use sociological-phenomenology it was also imperative to select an appropriate methodology and methods of data collection. In Chapter 3, I therefore made the case for the use of an ethnographic methodology, comprising participant observation and interviews. These methods espoused the position of a research '*traveller*' (Kvale &

Brinkmann, 2009), wandering and conversing together with the participants through their individual, but also collective swimming lifeworlds. Upon my return from the field, I have attempted to tell these tales of swimming, and have outlined how these tales contribute to academic knowledge and the generation of phenomenologically-sensitive insights. Additionally, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) note, these journeys have also affected me. Whilst I reflected on my time at ANP Swimming and my encounters with those whose voices are portrayed in this account and others who are not, it continued to impact upon me personally and professionally (in both academic and coaching roles). I started to view experiences and interactions with others in a different light, taking more time to understand their position, and how we could solve any concerns or problems together.

In Chapter 3, I also reflected on my position within the research setting and some of the challenges that I faced during that time especially in relation to role and positionality, as time in the field progressed and the coaches at ANP Swimming recognised my abilities as a coach and therefore put more trust in me in this particular role. However, despite these challenges, without this knowledge of coaching, and my own embodied knowledge of being a competitive swimmer, I simply wouldn't have been able to gain the level of access, and rapport that I did with the swimmers. It is this point that I principally want to emphasis here, in that it is not just about being able to collect data *per se*, but it is more about the quality and type of data that can be collected. By carrying with me the embodied knowledge that I have, I was able to 'walk, swim, and talk' the language of an insider, while still, for the majority of time maintaining a critical distance from which to conduct research. From this perspective, the methods selected for this study were highly applicable but, as with all methods, they were not without challenge or limitations.

The first limitation relates to having conducted short immersions (three, five-week blocks) across as season as opposed to embedding myself within the programme for the full year. This, however, was an unavoidable situation due to financial and other project related constraints, for example, having to 'amass' time in Copenhagen and undertake a variety of PhD courses to accumulate ECTS points, so as to satisfy the University of Copenhagen PhD requirements.

I could also have returned to the pool myself, actively and corporeally to engage with the training practices and embodied experiences of the swimmers. This, however, was ruled out due to my level of motivation, age and its consequences for embodied physical capital, and the subsequent amount of embodied physical capital needed to undertake such a challenge. Instead I had to rely on my 'vulgar competence' (Garfinkel, 2002) with the swimming lifeworld to help me make sense of the swimmers' accounts and representing their sensual lived experiences as evocatively as possible in written format. At this time I must once again emphasise, that commensurate with the phenomenological tradition that emphasises the incompleteness of all knowledge and understanding, this account is inevitably only partial due to the specific characteristics (age, socio-cultural location, ability) of the participants and myself, and because we can never *fully* capture or convey the essential or key structures of lived experience (Allen-Collinson, 2011a). This inevitable incompleteness yet desire to portray the accounts as evocatively as I could was something that I often struggled with. There was many a moment of sitting staring at the computer screen hoping for divine inspiration to hit. In the end, I let the swimmers' stories assist me out of the darkness, as they provided the building blocks around which I was then able to construct this account weaving my own thoughts, and those of the various theorists into the relevant chapters. As I write this, however, I am still considering my next steps and wondering if a creative writing course would help me construct more evocative accounts in the future.

9.2.3 Avenues for Future Research

Despite the results of this study satisfy Smith's (2018) notions of naturalistic and analytic generalisability, as well as being transferable to other physical-cultural spheres, they are generated from a sample that was relatively small, predominately white, British (with the exception of three athletes, two of whom were not interviewed and one participant who was Irish), and aged 18 to 22. The results therefore do not represent a wide-ranging 'sample' or perspective of, and on the competitive swimming lifeworld, nor was this the aim of the study. Other researchers may therefore wish to take forward the research into new and different aspects of the swimming lifeworld, via this methodological and theoretical framework to develop a greater understanding of these experiences and the competitive swimming lifeworld. Future research could therefore be undertaken within

different settings, both nationally and internationally, and a focus on differing age bands could also prove a fruitful avenue for further investigation. I have focused on senior performance swimming, but from some of the swimmers' responses in relation to the experiences from their previous clubs, there may well be substantive differences between the accounts of the swimmers in age group and youth programmes, compared to what was being experienced at ANP Swimming. Additionally, this study focused solely on able-bodied swimmers. There are, however, an increasing number of para-swimmers whose accounts undoubtedly also warrant attention. Furthermore, I have also undertaken research on only 'indoor' competitive swimming. There may well be additional body techniques or sensory experiences to unearth with those fortunate enough to train outdoors and have to engage with weather in the aquatic lifeworld (Allen-Collinson, Jennings, Vaittinen, & Owton, 2018b; Throsby, 2016).

Away from the swimmers, the experiences of the coaches would also merit consideration. Their story is not overly present in this thesis, as the research design focused upon the lived experiences of the swimmers themselves, but from my experiences of coaching at a youth and performance level, there are a number of domains that merit further research. These include the under-researched 'dirty', unseen, stressful parts of coaching, and how often-negative embodied experiences and relationships which coaches have not only with athletes, but with other stakeholders in an athlete's career at all levels, impact upon coaches' social and emotional well-being. Investigating these 'dark side' experiences could lead to a greater understanding of the coaching process and the swimming lifeworld.

Finally, on the publication of the first article from this thesis I was asked by my brother, who is currently a high-performance coach for Swim Wales, if there was a 'coach friendly' version of the paper available. This got me thinking in terms of how to make the results from not just this thesis but any academic work more accessible to those on the ground. In light of this I propose to disseminate some key points from the results via blogs or other social media formats in order for coaches, swimmers and anyone else who is interested to be able to access this information.

9.3 Final Reflective Deliberations

In closing, I would like to make some reflective points in regard to the research journey I have been on this past three years. When I began this journey, I had just left coaching and would have classified myself as being 99 percent coach and 1 percent academic. I was a complete neophyte to sociology and phenomenology (a word I couldn't even pronounce at first) but I have learnt a great deal about both of these academic disciplines, although I am under no illusion that I have only just begun to scratch the surface of either. I have learnt about the emotional and embodied nature of qualitative research. I have learnt about interactions and relationships with my participants, my supervisors and the broader academic network. Most importantly, however, I have learnt a lot about myself. I still feel like a bit of outsider to the world of academia, but my position has shifted. From gaining experience of presenting my work at conferences, or delivering workshops to other academics in Copenhagen and Sweden I have come to realise that some of what I have been studying has actually gone in and stuck. I wouldn't say I am completely comfortable, but a fire has been lit beneath me in terms of wanting to know and understand more. I now see myself more like 50/50 or maybe even 60/40 toward the academic me over the coaching me. As I close this chapter, therefore, and prepare for my examination, I hope to be able to continue 'travelling' not only in the swimming lifeworld but in other lifeworlds, sharing and understanding the embodied experiences of those involved.

Additionally, I would just like to raise one further point in regard to how this journey has impacted upon me. It relates to the first conference presentation I did in 2018, where one member of the audience asked me what the potential impact or practical applications of the knowledge generated from these swimmers lived embodied experiences could be. I remember saying that beyond informing someone what it was like to be a swimmer, I wasn't sure if there would be much of an impact. However, having now committed the words to paper and having had a chance to reflect on their meaning with my coach's hat firmly placed back on my head, I can see how some of the methodological steps (such as the epochē) and the swimmers' accounts could be vital in helping develop a more critical coaching eye especially in regard to the planning and delivery of a successful sporting environment and culture. I know it would certainly do this for me, should I ever return to the coaching lifeworld.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Exploring Embodied Experiences in Competitive Swimming.

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this study is to investigate and uncover in depth the accounts of those involved in competitive swimming.

Why have I been invited?
You have been invited as you meet our criteria of being a 'performance' swimmer.

What would be involved for me?
You will be observed during your normal training and competition programme over a period of a few days. At the end of that observation period you will have an interview lasting approximately 45-60mins.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
You will help to add to a developing body of research into sporting embodiment and the senses. It is hoped that the insights generated will also help shape future coaching practices and behaviours.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of participation?
There is no risk of injury and there are no risks associated with the interviews / focus groups. If any of the questions were to make you feel uncomfortable then you don't have to answer, and you always have the right to withdrawal.

Do I have to take part?
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time.

What do I need to do if I wish to take part?
Please read this Information Sheet and ask any questions that you may have about the process. If you are happy to be involved, then please read and sign the Consent Form and return it to the investigator.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?
Yes. Your identity will never be revealed in any publications, but obviously your coach and teammates will be aware. They will also be informed of the purpose of the research and their details will remain confidential as well. All information you provide will be handled in strict confidence, and will be seen only by me as the investigator and by my PhD supervisors.

What if I have any concerns or queries?
If you have any concerns at any time during the research project you can contact myself on gmcnarry@lincoln.ac.uk; Tel: 01522 886680 or my PhD supervisor: Professor Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson on JAllenCollinson@lincoln.ac.uk; Tel: 01522 887728.

If you would like to talk to someone about any of the ethical issues relating to the project please contact Dr Danny Taylor (dtaylor@lincoln.ac.uk; Tel: 01522 886845) at the University of Lincoln.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Please complete the Consent Form below

Gareth McNarry

Appendix 2 – Consent Form

I agree to take part in this research project which involves my participation in observations and interviews. Any information I provide will remain strictly confidential.

The full details of the research have been explained to me and I am fully aware of what is expected of me as a participant.
I am aware that I am able to withdraw from the study at any point, for any reason.
I am aware that the research results and any information I have provided are fully confidential and that no reference in any written publication or oral presentation will link me to participation in the study.
I am aware that my responses will not be attributable to me in any written or oral presentation of the study.
I am aware that all the information I provide will be kept securely at the University of Lincoln
I am aware that my participation in this study is completely voluntary. If I decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. I am aware that if I decide to participate, I may choose to withdraw at any time and ask that any data collected concerning myself is destroyed.
I have read and understand the information above, and any questions that I had have been fully answered. I agree to participate in this study.

_____

Name (Print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

If the participant is under the age of eighteen or vulnerable and unable to provide informed consent:

Name (Print): _____

Signature (Parent/Guardian): _____ Date: _____

I declare that I have explained the testing procedure in full and have made myself available for any questions the participant may wish to ask.

Name (Print): _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3 – Example of Jotted Fieldnotes from OneNote Application

09/10/17 AM

Sunday, 8 October 2017 - 19:29

Remy comes left as well.

Poolside feels warm this morning, warmer than usual.

Each swimmer has their own kit bag with everything usually stored in the pool store at the scoreboard end of the pool - usual kit included - kickboard/pull buoy/paddles/fins/snorkel

They all leave their drinks bottles on the step or ledge at the end of the pool outside of the pre-pool area? I wonder why they do this.

The far side of the pool is definitely cooler than the entrance side. Most likely as there seems to be fresh air vents on far side and near side has all the lights on it. Lights that shine upwards and reflect off of glass/mirror panels that contain 10x10 smaller convex glass/plastic panels

I can't gauge how they are this morning. They are all in the pre-pool room. I don't feel like interacting. I feel a bit disconnected this morning. Like an outsider again

Nick – 'nothing to flash this morning a bit of speed then aerobic' - tonight will be a tough one – 'use this morning to get into the week'

Monitoring? App? Weighing in? - on morning session days, you put in hrs of sleep, quality of sleep, readiness to train plus weight on Mondays

Big 50s on Thursday Nick explains its 50 fly, 50UW, 50s BC, Brs, FC, 100IM - all from a stand-up all timed - fasted total time wins. He is getting Stephen hyped already about defending his title. NTC also keen to be involved - it could be during centre pool-time but will have to keep myself posted on this. I'm excited to see how this goes.

Racing - some good some bad, Charles ok. Comments on Clint who swam really well especially after missing 4 months last year with an ACL injury.

Nick asks some of the lads how Saturday session went – reply from Wade - yeah good was holding 1:42 on the 150s – Tony responds 'solid'

There are structures within structures. Tony and Nick looking to trim the size of the groups

They have platinum gold silver bronze categorised swimmers within the groups - based on Fina A times and percentages of those. Different categories gave access to different services. Aim to be all platinum or gold. Looking to shift the quality

They use dropbox to communicate weekly plans etc

Eddie – ‘I feel like shit this morning!’ - Does some stretching, some push ups and some jump lunges - brings a few laughs from others

Nick’s group going some head to heads. Few of the lads loving it - looking for the winner each time - the chirpier chattier lads - Heath/Eddie and Wade/Remy - finger wagging in celebration, slapping the water in disappointment - Tony pleased with the enthusiasm and tells them

Tony’s group in same lanes as last Monday morning - more practicality of the session than their choice -

Tony – ‘think long neck get head down don’t look forward’

Focus on extending - pushing into extension. Can be difficult with pb at ankles

‘2:30 is movvvving!!!!!’

All working towards flat back on the block

Nick again has offered slower turnarounds, but no one has taken them - some definitely should have as they are struggling with making the normal ones

‘Alright guys here we go last round - best one’

Tony – ‘1:45 turnaround and we can’t make it! Serious’ – in anger

Tony disappointed that some of them went out Saturday especially as some of them were sick last week

NTC happy with his Saturday - positive outcomes from his Friday/sat experiment

Asked Heath and Eddie how that was for a Monday morning - pretty standard or as good as they go really - we are just fucked! Saturday morning was grim - the classic coach is away set them something horrific - Heath I’m sure all coaches are like that

Tony spoke to Natasha and Ben about going out on Saturday - disappointed as he has also given them a type of program for 50 swimmers where they go 7/4. Concerned that they aren’t as invested in it as he is. He is 110% in, but it doesn’t seem the same from them if this is what they want to do!

Tony then goes to take a photo of the 2nd half of his session from this morning - comments on why he doesn’t know why he is taking a photo of that aerobic shite! - ‘Can’t polish a terd’ comment

Tony is big believer in anaerobic work for his events, but he does coach in an anaerobic style

Tony’s group not much chatter after the speed work - main set was aerobic with varying turn arounds cover kick pull and swim - turned into varied pace - 2nd round seem much more effective due to fins for the kick

Tony physio meeting - swimmers don’t like the one they have - Tony meeting with head of physio to discuss.

Appendix 4 – Example of Written Up Fieldnotes

Monday 9th October 2019, AM

Side note reflection – on leaving Lincoln last night I was extremely torn and a little sad. I honestly didn't want to leave home and come back to the place where I am staying and being away from loved ones. I hope this doesn't have a bearing on my mood throughout the week.

The alarm sounds but its quieter. I must have turned the volume down yesterday, so I don't really pay it that much attention. Then somewhere subconsciously I twig that that was my alarm and it's time to get up. It's frustrating as once again I've not had the best night sleep. Waking up several times throughout the night. I wonder if it's this bed or the place I'm staying. It's not my home so feels alien to me. But its 'home' for the next few weeks at least from Monday to Friday it is anyway so I just have to accept that.

I get up and get ready. I listen for the sound of rain outside and thankfully there is none. It might be the beginning of October, but this morning seems quiet mild. I still wrap up warm for the walk to the pool though. The last thing I want is to get ill as that would mean time away from the pool so as not to make anyone else sick.

As I arrive at the pool and start to disrobe, I notice that there doesn't seem to be any of the swimmers here yet. I also notice that it feels warmer again this morning. I'm instantly aware that I am beginning to sweat.

I take in the soundings again, almost like a reset. Is anything different this week. All seems the same, with the exception of the air temperature.

The swimmers are starting to arrive, and I notice that as they head for the land room, some of them are carrying their fins. I wonder why this is as they normally keep all their kit in their mesh/net bag which is then stored on poolside in the equipment store. Within each bag is usually an assortment of equipment that includes kickboard, pull-buoy/fins/paddles/snorkel as a minimum. Some others have extras like sponges or parachutes, tennis balls or cups. It then dawns on me that some of the swimmers where racing this weekend so more than likely had their fins with them for warm-ups and swim-downs.

I also notice something else this morning. As the swimmers enter the pre-pool room, they all seem to leave their drinks bottles on the end wall of the seating area or on the steps next to it. I have no idea why they would do this. It seems strange not to take their drink into the room with them. Perhaps they aren't allowed them in there but this would seem a strange rule. Or is this just one of those oddities that started way back and has just continued.

As I walk around the pool to the far side to sit, there is a definite change in temperature. There is cool fresh air coming from vents on this side of the pool that have made the air temperature cooler. The seating area side is much warmer[21]. That side also has the lighting system. Great big lights shining upwards on to panels that each include 100 convex shaped mirrors to reflect the light back out and across the pool. It's not any wonder this side is hotter, not only with heat that comes off the light unit itself but the radiated heat that comes back off the mirrors.

The swimmers from Nick's group are all now in conducting their pre-pool but I don't feel like interacting today. I feel a bit disconnected. From both them and myself. More so than even last week when I was 'new'. I feel more like an outsider this morning than I have done at any other time. I wonder what this is. I wonder if it's part of me wishing I was back in coaching or being more a part of this group than I have or that I am. But this is stupid especially as they seem to have indoctrinated me reasonably well so far[22].

As I sit and watch, Nick comes over and gives me a copy of the session. "Nothing to flash this norming. Just a bit of speed then some aerobic" he comments. The words speed and aerobic mixer are written on the top of the session and circled in a cloud bubble. This clearly delivers the message as to what this session is about.

As the swimmers prepare to enter the water Nick checks that each of them has completed their monitoring app. This is something new that I have not heard them talk about before. It appears that they have an app for their phones into which the swimmers have to[23] record their time to bed, hours of sleep, quality of sleep, how they feel physical and mentally on each day that they have a morning session. Additionally, on the Monday morning they are also to input their weight. I know that British Swimming have a similar programme, so I wonder if this is a spin off from that[24].

Just before they get in Nick quickly runs through the session emphasising like last week how Monday should be a bit of a wake up for the system to get into this week. It shouldn't work you too hard as again this evening is a tougher one.

As they are getting in Nick is talking to Stephen regarding the Big 50s on Thursday evening and if he is going to be able to defend his crown. I'm intrigued by what this is, so I ask. It involves setting up the pool as if it was a competition and each swimmer completes each of the following events; 50s of Fly, UW, BC, BRS, FC and 100m IM. They are a stand-up swim – from a dive race start – and are all timed using the electronic timing. The winner is the person with the fastest total time from all 6 events. Nick is trying to get Stephen hyped about defending his title already. Apparently the NTC swimmers are also keen to be a part of this event. I'm excited already to see how this goes. I feel it could be a really electric atmosphere, especially if the NTC swimmers are involved, and an opportunity to watch

[21] This is mostly due to the cool air coming through the vents.

[22] I do need to continue to engage with as many of the swimmers as possible though. I need to cast my net as wide as possible to hopefully get the interviewees I need

[23] Do they have to or is this optional??

[24] When I meet with Tony and Nick to discuss their planning, I will ask them about the merits of this and where it has come from.

some of the world's best do what they do and step up to a challenge. I need to keep an eye on when the time for this as they may end up using some of the centre time which would mean an earlier start.

I ask Nick how those that raced on Saturday went. His response, "some good some bad, Charles ok". He does comment on Clint who swam really well especially after missing 4 months of last season after injuring his ACL.

Nick then asks some of the lads who didn't race how Saturday mornings session had gone. Wade replies with "yeah good, I was holding 1:42 on the 150s." Nick seems pleased and gives a good lad response.

Nick then comments on how many swimmers he seems to have in this morning. It does seem to be a lot. I ask him how many they should have or would like to have. His current group is around 18 but they offer some sessions to the development group who can't make their times due to lectures. So, he has an inflated number this morning. He says to me they would ideally like 12 swimmers in each of the performance groups with a further 30 in the development group. In order to do that they are looking over the next few years to tighten the qualifying times but still ensuring that they each have the quality of athlete they believe they need and want and number of athletes that can still win BUCS.

He then explains to me how they have structures within the current squads as well. They run a system of platinum, gold, silver, bronze, which are selected from a percentage of a FINA A time[25]. To achieve platinum, you have to have achieved the FINA A time. What this then does is give the swimmers access to different levels of service. I.e. all gold level swimmers will gym at the same time. Nick and Tony's desire is to have all the swimmers in these groups to be Platinum or Gold, possibly silver but with any bronze being in the development squad.

Sidenote: They use dropbox to communicate to the swimmers the plan for the week!

As Nick's group complete the warm-up, they shift into some head to head short distance race challenges. They are partnered up with someone of roughly their speed. Partner 1 gets to go from the block, partner two has to go from a dead start (Floating just off the wall, no push off) but they get to use their fins. They race of 15/20/25m distances then switch around so they each get to dive or use the fins.

After the first couple of reps Eddie jumps out to get ready to get back on the block but starts doing a few push-ups and jumping lunges. I give him a questioning look to which his response is I "feels like shite this morning". I put two and two together in that he is doing these to try and spark his body into life. Some of the other lads catch what he is up to and start laughing at him. In good humour, no malice, just funny to see someone do jumping lunges mid set. Eddie defends his position once again this time at the lads saying he feels awful!

[25] FINA A time is time set by FINA as a minimum standard for a nation to take two swimmers per event to a FINA international event i.e. Olympics or Worlds

As I watch on, I see how some of the boys are really getting into this – challenging each other, being vocal about racing each other. Giving each other a bit of stick. They are mainly the chattier of the lads – Heath vs Eddie or Wade vs Remy. The ones who you would expect to be doing this but it's still good to see. There is some finger wagging going on in celebration from winners. Some slapping of the water in disappointment from the losers. Even Nick is chuckling away on the side at some of their antics. Genuine desire to win and hate losing. The girls not so engaged or so it appears. They are "a bit too nice" Nick eludes to – wishes they could take a leaf out of the boys' book[26].

Nick's group are now moving onto their "aerobic mixer" and again as with last week Nick has given them the option of 2 different types of turnaround times. No-one opts for the 'easier' times which Nick feels for some will be a mistake! He wonders if there is a bit of peer pressure that people feel they need to do the quicker times to impress each other. On the evidence that I have seen over the last week I don't get the feeling that this would be the case or that people would give anyone a hard time for not choosing the faster times, but no-one takes up the offer of the slow. This as Nick points out is a risky game as it could well compromise not only this evenings' set but the rest of the week[27]. After the 1st 200m pull which is on 2:30, Wade as he touches the wall shouts "2:30 is movvvinnngggg!!!!". Although he is one of the ones who will comfortably make this way through this set its strange to see him express this[28].

As they progress through this set its clear that some have made the wrong choice in terms of the times they have selected to go off. Nick gives one of the girls a breather as he doesn't think she has up to now stopped once! He gathers them together at the end of the first set and again offers up the easier times. I still don't think anyone took up the offer. This round does however allow them to use their fins on the kick. This should help make it easier and it clearly does, perhaps this incentive helped make some stay on the tougher times[29].

I notice that during this set there now isn't much chatter. The varying pace and times and combination of kick/pull/swim haven't left an awful lot of time for interaction especially when they work from a 10sec interval between swimmers. I wonder what each of them thinks about during a grind of a set like this[30].

With regards to Tony's group I notice they are all in the exact same lanes as last Monday morning. This isn't however a coincidence as he uses lanes 1&2 for the 100/50 swimmers and then lanes 3&4 for the 200/100 swimmers as they have slightly different sessions.

They paddle through their warm-up which is a simple 800m mix. Then they have some sculling and body position work to do. As they push off on the sculling Tony is quick to say,

[26] But why, they aren't the boys – why do they want them to be more like the boys – can they not just be females? Why the comparison.
[27] It will be interesting to see how they respond tonight if they have indeed worked too hard in this session
[28] I wonder what the need for this was – is it that he is tired and is expressing that 2:30 is tough today or is he just saying how that 2:30 is starting to move things on a bit in terms of their training intensity?
[29] Again, it's good to see this group wanting to challenge themselves – this is different to Tony's where there are possibly a few who would take the easy option every time if given – is this the old distance vs sprint divide?
[30] Something to ask!!!

“think long neck, get your head down, don’t look forward”. Making reference to how he wants their body position to be as flat and as neutral in the water as possible. Some of the swimmers don’t have a snorkel on for this which I find surprising as it would allow them to hold this position better and then focus on the “Human Paddle” part of the 50m rather than having to worry about getting a breath. Tony also asks Emily and Barkley to focus on their extension “to push into the extension”. Barkley says how she finds this hard with the pull-buoy at her ankles as she finds it difficult to rotate.

This skill work is couples with some change of pace swimming as they progress through the rounds. As they enter the last of these a red effort 150m swim Tony gives some encouragement “alright guys, here we go, last one – best one”.

Out of this they have some aerobic work to do. This is where the split in session comes through. The 200/100 girls have something slightly longer with the 200 girls going 4rds and the 100girls going 3. The 100/50 guys are slightly shorter again with some people doing 3 or 2 rds. Each block no matter the group includes some kick, some pull and some swim across a variety of paces (white, pink, red).

In the middle of the second round some of the sprinters miss one of the turnarounds and Tony definitely isn’t happy about it. “Soft cocks” he says as he walks back. “cant make a 1:45 turnaround”. He is also disappointed in the fact that some of them went out on Saturday, even more so as 1 swimmer was sick last week but was well enough to go out! Tells me he will have a word with them at the end!

BCD arrives and is his normal jovial self. I ask him how Saturday went and he is on the whole pleased. Feels that the broken swim exercise that they did Friday, really helped to get them going and made Saturday much more worthwhile as they had things, they could discuss pre and post-race. Things that had cropped up on Friday that they could look to work on during Saturday and things they can take forward.

As Nick’s session draws to a close, I ask Heath and James how that was for a Monday morning. “Pretty standard” from Heath, before adding “we are just fucked”. Eddie “as good as it can be for a Monday, I’m just a bit tired”. I ask them if they had raced but they hadn’t. they did however have a bit of a grim session on Saturday with Heath eluding how it always seems to be that way when a coach is away – they always seem to leave a stinker of a session. I laugh knowing that he is not far wrong.

As Tony’s group begin to finish the aerobic work from their session, he takes a photo of the whiteboard where he has written it up so he can put it in his log, but comments on why “he doesn’t know why he is taking a photo of this aerobic shite!” “Can’t polish a terd” is also mentioned. Tony is a coach of Anaerobic events, so believes in working more anaerobically. However, he understands the need for a bit of an aerobic base line, just doesn’t mean he has to like it.

As Natasha is cooling down, she asks me how my morning is. Yeah not bad I say. She comments on how if she didn’t have to be here, she probably wouldn’t be. I tell her that’s exactly the same for me. I know where I would prefer to be!

As they start exiting Tony calls Ben and Natasha over to have a chat about them going out on Saturday. I don't hear the conversation, but he comes over to relay some of it back to me after. He mentions how stunned Natasha looks in regard to how on earth he knows. He says it doesn't matter how he knows, its more disappointing that they have done this especially after they all agreed as a group that the pub Olympics team building event would be the last one. He also mentions how he has gone out on a limb to let those guys try a different programme that is 7swim and 4gym. A pure 50m swimmer programme and that he has committed to this, but they aren't showing the same commitment by doing what they are doing.

Personal Reflections

As I mentioned in the text, I didn't feel myself this morning. Felt distance from both myself and the swimmers. I hope this was just a blip this morning and I'll feel more connected again tonight.

Writing fieldnotes is still challenging. Jaqui has provided some feedback on a session from last week which I now need to look through and work out where/how I am making assumptions as opposed to just reporting what I see. I need to be more reflective and spend some more time re-reading the notes and looking for constants/themes that keep coming through.

Finally solved the registration problem with regards to Uni visit as well so fingers crossed, I can collect my ID Card today and get those things rolling as well. Although having a place to work isn't always my best option as I tend to get distracted, but it will be good to share space and knowledge with others.

Appendix 5 – Example Section from an Individual Interview Transcript

Jean: Yeah massively, I'd say, I'd say with any swimmer as well, but like especially me like at school, I was 'the swimmer' like that's, that's, that's your identity, erm to a lot of people, like you are a swimmer. Erm and if I'm honest, I think that's why a lot of people continue swimming for a long as they do. Even though they say hate it, it's because they are scared of what their identity will be after swimming. Erm, so for me, when I stopped swimming, I was scared, I was like, what, like what do I do now, like, but [pause] yeah, that realisation for me knowing that, that realisation period where I did have time off swimming, did make me realise that I'm not, there's more to me than just swimming,

GMC: Uh-hmm

Jean: but I do want to be the swimmer, while I can be. Erm, but now like back swimming and back being the swimmer, there's always, I don't know, I feel like I've got a really balanced mind-set and I'm in a very good place at the mom, very good place, cos I'm just content with swimming and knowing that, I'm not going to be a swimmer forever, I've accepted that and, there is no kind of like pressure or expectation to perform because I've seen the other side of, of life really. Erm, and eh, at the end of the day, even though you are so emotional, I am so emotionally attached to swimming, erm [pause], its only swimming. It's not the be all and end all. I think you get caught up because, caught up in it so much because it's like a full-time job, really, like, you put so much time and effort in, erm and emot, and you put your emotion into it. You push yourself so hard. You definitely love it as if it was like a physical being, I think. So, erm, yeah, when it, when it, so when I stopped swimming, it was, it was a bit like a break-up [laughter]. Erm [pause], so I've lost what, where I was going with that that.

GMC: No, it's great, it's interesting like to, to, eh, to describe it almost as a physical entity as like a person almost, as in you have a relationship with it, it's just, that, I'd never thought of it in that respect but as soon as you say that it's like, actually pretty much what it is like. Because you spend so much time with it, it's like having a partner, it's like having something to share and I mean, one of the other things you said there in your intro was you talked about, how about being 'healthy and happy' and I now, I've only been around for sort of four or five weeks and so, in that short time that's pretty much what I've seen from you as a person

Jean: Yeah

GMC: so, like you smile 90 percent of the time, your singing, your laughing your enjoying having a bit of banter with the lads as well. As those like the important things to you?

Jean: Yeah, definitely, definitely, because I was in such a serious environment at Club X, erm, that was, if you could compare, what you have observed and what you have seen over the past 4 to 5 weeks to what I was like 18months ago, you wouldn't recognise me. Like I was not, not nearly the person that I am now than I was a Club X. I was there at Club A, like the person you see now is very much the Club A me, but it wasn't the Club X me at all.

GMC: So, do you think that you lost a bit of your own identity in that time as well.

Jean: Yeah, definitely, def, like a 1 hundred and ten percent. I was not, I was not happy really, looking back at it. Erm, yeah, I wasn't myself at all. I was like a zombie really,

GMC: Just doing it because you felt you had to do. this was what...

Jean: Just you was in a routine as well. I think a massive part of swimming is you're in you're in a routine and you're in autopilot mode, you just get on with and you just, you go with the flow and you, you, you're constantly thinking about what you've got to do next, so for me at the time, it was swim, school, swim, home, swim and it was very monotonous and very repetitive but you just, you go with it because like I say you're in a routine. Erm, but yeah definitely [pause] definitely now I'd say, the most important thing for me at the moment is, having like, enjoy, like enjoyment, health and happiness, like that is, that's what motivates me as well. As long as I enjoy something and I want to do it and I want to be somewhere, then I will perform well and I will work hard. Whereas, if I was coming to training and I didn't want to be here and [pause] I just wouldn't, I wouldn't put, don't think, if my heart wasn't in it, I wouldn't train as hard, I just wouldn't want, yeah like, I say.

GMC: You wouldn't enjoy

Jean: It wouldn't be worthwhile, it wouldn't be. And then that would negatively affect my health, with regards to mental health and stress. It's just not, just not worth it, really

GMC: Ok, so that, that the Club X experience, is been, although it was negative and stop me if I'm putting word in your mouth by the way, it's actually been almost now you can reflect back on it, it's almost a positive thing...

Jean: definitely

GMC: ...because you know, actually, I know what I want...

Jean: Uh-hmm

GMC: ...I know what I don't want...

Jean: Uh-hmm

GMC: ...and I'm gonna just, while I'm doing what I'm doing I'm going to enjoy it until I get to that point of, this is, I'm done now.

Jean: Yeah, definitely

GMC: Now that's [pause], that's obviously something that you have come to terms with, being able to just say [inaudible or can't understand 34:06] and that's allowed you to be Jean as I see you know. Great.

Jean: Yeah, like, I'm just so much more relaxed. I come swimming and. So there used to be a lot of pressure from the coach at Club X, to train well as well like, like as I say I was always a good trainer like I always performed well in training but if you didn't perform, if you didn't train well, like let's say, which at the time, at the time, its sounds stupid looking back now because Nick is so different, and training is so different and lifestyle her is so different, but if you had a bad a session, you'd get punished for it. Which isn't right, because there are so many things going on. You could be mentally fatigued, physically fatigued, you could just be having a bad day, like illness or injury all these things could be going on but if you had a bad session you were like punished and looked down on. Whereas here, I can come training relaxed, knowing that [pause] if I'm having a great session great, if I'm having a bad session, so what like, I'm here like. Erm, I really used to beat myself, beat myself up about training and how well I performed at training whereas here, if I have a bad session, yeah I will sometimes get upset, but I'm very much more relaxed about it and I just, laugh about it or shrug it off. I won't even think about it really because, like I say like, coming to ANP Swimming, is, has made me, I feel like this is my proper transition into senior swimming and, like made me realise that, I am a senior swimmer and that I am gonna have off days. I'm not, I'm not 11 anymore, I can't just keep going, I'm not like a wind-up doll, erm, but I think having Nick as a coach who understands that and nurtures that and respects that you do have bad days is, amazing, like I couldn't ask for anything better really. Nick is definitely the best coach, with, with regards to recognising, the, with regards to recognising that holistic view or a swimmer. Like so, yes I'm a swimmer, but Nick also knows that I'm a student and like he recognises that I do have a life away from swimming and that, I am a person, rather than just a swimmer. Whereas I think the Club X coach, got, got a bit, not confused, cos, yeah but I think he very much, with, with the Club X coach it was very much coach, swimmer, there was no, erm, no in between really like. We'd never have a conversation that was, a normal conversation. The conversation would always be about swimming. You'd never have a general chit-chat about how's life, stuff like that. Whereas I think coming to uni, just everything has completely changed. Like swimming's, swimming's part of my life and an aspect of life rather than 'my life'. If that makes sense

GMC: yeah, yeah that makes total sense. So, I'm guessing and I mean it, and it's come from that little bit there and having seen you guys in sessions and stuff, Nick almost gives you that [pause] option of having, that input, and having that dialogue and making those choices, cos I've seen from time to time, on the sessions where you have had, option a or option b or option c and if you're feeling, /good you can go...

Jean: /good, you can go for it, uh-hmm

GMC: ...whatever you want, or if you're feeling bad then, but he doesn't, there is no, oh you've taken option C, you big Jessy, or whatever.

Jean: Yeah, whereas, yeah, at Club X if we ever did get options. If we ever did get options. Well we never really got options, but say we did. You'd know that there wasn't an option really. Like you'd always have to choose the harder option. Erm, whereas here, like you said like [pause] there's erm, there's no judgement here. That's another thing with Club X like I feel like, not just swimming and the way I was performing like, I, I mentioned previously my, erm, body weight and body image and stuff like that. So, at Club X I was like physically

leanest I have ever been. I was so fit like, like physically and my skin-folds where low and all of that. I looked; I'd say it was the best physical condition I've ever been in. Erm, but I didn't see that, due to, partly due to the way the coach spoke to, well he spoke to all the girls like that, but he way he spoke to, yeah, us, slash, me about our body weight and body image. So yeah it was, just very negative. It got to points where, even though like I say I was in the best physical condition I've ever been in, there was no reason at all for me to have been ashamed with my body. Like I look back at pictures and I'm like 'oh my god I'm tiny', but like there would be times when I'd be petrified of putting a swimming costume on and walking on poolside. That'd be another factor why I wouldn't want to go swimming, just because I didn't want to put my costume on and be in front of my coach. Whereas coming here like I was saying like, there's just no judgement at all. Erm, so when I came here, I was like. I went from one extreme cos obviously I'd stopped swimming. I went from being in the best physical condition I've ever been in to the worst physical condition I've even been in. Erm, and I remember the first meeting I had with Nick, in, it was in 2 or 3 weeks of being here, and he was like what are your goals and what do you think you can do to like to improve your performance. And one of the things I mentioned was, like skin-folds slash body weight and he looked at me and went 'Really?' and I was like, [pause] "Yes" and he was like, he was like, oh ok, well if that's something that you feel you need to work on then that's great but he was like I'm not telling you that you need to improve on that. Erm, and that for me was like, I was like, *"what"* because previously at Club X that was like one of the main factors that was constantly picked at and I came to ANP Swimming and my coach was actually, kind of telling me that he was happy with how I was when, even though I was 7 kilograms heavier than when I was at my, best, peak physical condition. I was, I was a bit like. That took me a while, but like, to process that I was taken back by it massively, but for the better. I was like [pause] yeah, it just, it was nice, it was really nice and like, yeah I'm just so much more comfortable in this environment as well.

GMC: Has that carried on until now, cos I notice you guys still do your skin fold measurements and stuff now, but they are just, it's not seen as a [makes a surprised/shocked noise] this is something that, that...

Jean: Because, whereas yeah, whereas now I feel like, it's up to me. If I want to lose weight and I want to lower my skin-folds that's up to me and its down to me to do it. I'm not being told by anyone else, I need to be a certain weight or my skin folds are too high like, that pressure isn't coming from anywhere else but myself, which is great like, I can handle that, I can motivate myself to deal with that, but when I think, I think when it's constantly coming from someone else, [pause] it's, it comes, it just, it's not nice, I think it becomes destructive. Especially when like your trying so your trying so hard and you're still being told that it's not good enough, I think, that's when it, that's when the problems start to occur.

GMC: So, you've the fact that that one conversation with Nick, that meeting was just like 'oh I'm in charge, I'm in control of what I'm doing, and this is a [pause] this is me as Jean the swimmer being at the centre of your universe rather than being pulled from pillar to post by other people. Would that be...

Jean: Definitely, definitely, 100 percent right.

Appendix 6 – Example Section from a Group Interview Transcript

GMC: So, there are four different strokes, within the strokes there are different elements of the stroke between kick and pull and my question then really for you guys and this is for discussion more than anything is why do you think that you're better at some strokes than at others. So why does someone who has really good feel and skill on backstroke, flip them over onto freestyle and butterfly why can they transfer that feel and that technique

Eddie: I, well it's kind of the same as some people are good at English, some people are good at maths, just in the water some people are good at butterfly, some people are good at backstroke. It's very similar to that.

Clint: I'd say it's the club you come from as well though, so like your background.

GMC: Ok

Clint: So, like certain clubs always produce certain swimmers. Like, royal wolver will always produce more distance swimmers, whereas another club may produce more sprinters so like it is, also your genetics but also like what you have been brought up training for. Like the club that you were in.

Eddie: And there could be some amazing swimmers that have never been any good cos the training they've got when they were younger was just shit.

Clint: Yeah

Eddie: Say like the twitchiest guy alive is born, and he ends up doing like 60, 70k a week from when he was 5, he is not going to be good, you're just going to ruin him.

Wade: Yeah

Stephen: I think its technical a lot. So, say when I was about 12 like I just stuck with backstroke since then. There is no reason why I couldn't have picked another stroke I guess, it was just the one I was swimming at that time and since then anything technical its always backstroke, if I'm swimming freestyle I don't care, it's just a time for my brain to relax, my technique is horrendous but as soon as I'm on backstroke everything is purposeful and I think, I think that's a big difference, I've just focused on one and that's the reason why I'm better at it.

Charles: Why did you focus on one?

Stephen: I have no idea

Charles: Was it a choice

Wade: Could it be enjoyment?

Stephen: Yeah, I guess I just didn't like other strokes, I, but say for like breaststroke I wouldn't be a breaststroker just because of my knees,

Wade: Yeah, I'm the same,

Stephen: So, its certain, certain, breaststroke in particular that's more of a specialist one, I guess the other three are slightly more interchangeable. Like, I reckon I could have been a fly swimmer, but my technique is horrendous. I just never trained it, for years.

Wade: I think some strokes are just ruled out when you're younger cos you just can't do them. Like I could never do breaststroke, so it was just straight ruled out, do you know what I mean.

Scott: And people just shy away from the workload for fly probably. Like there might be quite a lot of fly swimmers that aren't actually fly swimmers just because they shy away from the hard-technical work for it.

Charles: Fly sets is just 25s innit,

(Laughter)

Stephen: Backstroke sets are the hardest

GMC: Right, then we are thinking then that its quite a bit of personal preference in that, in that not just, you've maybe shown a bit of aptitude for one stroke when you were younger or had a coach who is very good at developing, or is very good technically on certain strokes over others and its maybe socially influenced you as well. So, the medley guys in the room is that, well the three medley guys in the room is that still fair enough that even swimming that event you had exposure to

Eddie: Yeah,

GMC: a range when you were younger

Eddie: Every stroke bar breaststroke has been my number one stroke at some point in my life and its actually like from like 12 all the way to 18 its went from backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle, like that changed like 5 or 6 times so now I'm just a medley swimming and I don't have a number 1. Were like Scott, has a number 1

Scott: I'd put my, I've got, I had this guy, like my first coach,

GMC: Here we go,

Scott: He was like,

Wade: This guy (Laugh)

Scott: he was like proper, like I think he was proper good, and like he taught me all my strokes technically, like stripped them all down and really worked really hard on them so that was me.

Charles: I think I've only really done medley cos I was good at it. Like cos, like at 11 and 12 I was like I only swam freestyle at nationals and that and then when I was 13, I medalled in the medley and since then I've just swam medley. I think I medalled at the medalled in the 400 free at nationals and then the year after I didn't even compete in it cos I was just focusing on medley since I was 13.

Eddie: I'm the opposite of when Dan said he did freestyle he doesn't care cos what his techniques like, I was the opposite. When I was younger, I was the opposite, like I just wanted, like any stroke that we were doing I wanted to be good at it so that's probably, so even though I'm not exactly the best breaststroker,

Wade: I think that is a good point though, if your good at a stroke, your gonna want to do that stroke as well

Eddie: Yeah and I was sometimes the opposite, I wanted to work on the worst stroke all the time.

Wade: But if you are already good at it you may as well carry on doing it.

GMC: It's that social sort of enjoyment of swimming a stroke that you are good at. This is easier than doing 400 fly.

Stephen: I think the reason I picked backstroke, thinking about it is because, the only thing I was naturally good at was UW. So, like it makes sense to be, so my backstroke swim was terrible, I used to do long course events and I'd be 10m ahead off the start and then everyone would just go past and then I'd turn and go and then they'd all just swim past, so I was, at swimming I was never actually that good and I had to proper focus down on one stroke to learn how to swim, but like it's, I guess I never got the technical training that other people got, so I had to focus a lot and it could be a lot different if you've been taught from a young age, the technical aspects.

GMC: Perfect. Right, ok

Appendix 7 – Glossary of Terms used at ANP Swimming

1. Swimming Strokes

Abbreviation	Full Term
FR / FRS	Front Crawl
BK / Back	Backstroke
Fly	Butterfly
BRS	Breaststroke
I.M.	Individual Medley
No.1	A swimmer's main stroke

2. Session Types

Abbreviation	Full Term
HR (Heart Rate Set)	Hard Anaerobic Set often swum at blue/purple intensity
Overspeed	Usually with fins and paddles to generate faster than race pace
Aero	Aerobic: White-Red Intensities, longer reps, short rest
Prod	Lactate Production: Gold intensities, very short reps, long rest
Tolerance	Lactate Tolerance: Gold intensities, short reps, short rest
Overdistance	Long swims, moderate intensity, double race distance or more
Hypoxic	Breath hold work
Rainbow Set	Set designed to move through a range of intensities/colours

3. Swimming Paces

Abbreviation	Full Term
EZ	Easy Swim or Kick (similar to clear)
Clear	Recovery Swimming, no skill requirements
White	Base aerobic; easy with great skill and technique (HR <140)
Pink	Moderate aerobic (HR 130-160)
Red	Hard Aerobic (HR 150-170)
Blue	Anaerobic Capacity; fast often 100 B.E.S or 200/400 race pace
Purple	Anaerobic Power; fast often 50/100 race pace or 200 F.E.S
Green	Maximum Speed; 50m pace or faster

Abbreviation	Full Term
Gold	Explosive Speed
Platinum	Maximum Speed with which perfect technique is maintained
△ 100	100m Race Pace (the 100 could also be 200)
B.E.S (Back End Speed)	The target speed/time for the last 25 or 50m of a race
F.E.S (Front End Speed)	The target speed/time for the first 25 or 50m of a race
T.E.S (Top End Speed)	The fastest speed required in your race
Best Average	The best pace you can hold across all reps
Neg/Negative Split	Second half of swim to be faster than the first

4. Swimming Set Elements

Abbreviation	Full Term
SW / Swim	Swimming
K / Kick	Just using legs with or without a kickboard
P / Pull	Just using arms with a pull-buoy
D / Drill	Practice designed to work on specific skill of a stroke
Scull	Small movements with hands to generate catch/hold
SKIPS	Swim, Kick, IM, Pull, Swim
IM 1-2-3-4	IM with 1 length fly, 2 BK, 3 BRS, 4 FRS (numbers can vary)
On 60	These reps are on a 60 second turnaround.
③	Number of reps that correspond to a certain pace or time
Push 15!!!	Push start with 15m of maximum effort swimming
SC	Stroke Count (Number of strokes per length)
SR	Stroke Rate (Number of strokes per minute)
DPC	Distance per cycle (Maximum distance possible per stroke cycle)
DPS	Distance per stroke (Maximum distance possible per stroke)
UW	Under Water
Vert	Vertical Kicking
Breakout	The transition from UW phase to swim phase
Deadstart	Start from a floating position in the water
5in	5m in towards the wall

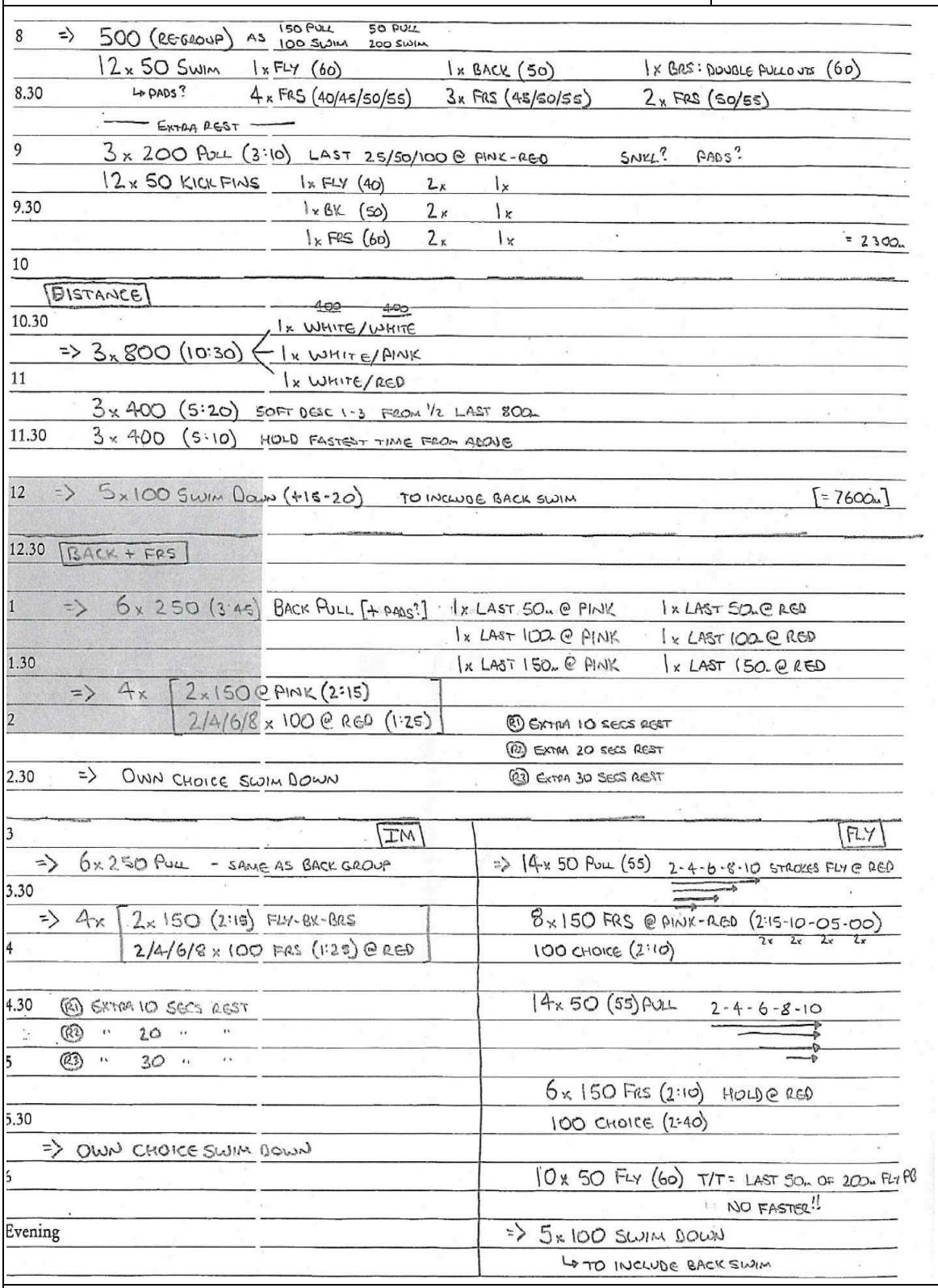
Abbreviation	Full Term
10out	10m out away from the wall
Flags	The backstroke flags stationed at 5m from the wall
Flip	Flip turn / somersault
4 kick (walls)	Complete 4 UW kicks off each wall (Number can vary)
BR3	Breathing every 3 strokes (Number can vary)
Broken	When a rep is broken into shorted elements with short rest
F.K.T.	Fly Kick Transfer – Drill used to work on catching/holding water
3-1	Ascend the time taken to swim each rep (fast to slow)
(Desc) 1-3	Descend the time taken to swim each rep (slow to fast)
Bank	Swimmers can go early to bank the rest
T/T	Target Time
PB	Personal Best
DAB	Double Arm Backstroke
Social	Social Kick usually placed at end of session as part of swim down

5. Swimming Equipment

Abbreviation	Full Term
Ⓕ	Fins on
PDLS / Pads	Paddles
F+P	Fins and Paddles
P+P	Pull plus paddles
Resisted	With rubber resistance band attached to waist
Sox	Netted drag socks
Chute	Parachute
Cups	Plastic cups used on forehead to stop head movement on BK
Suits	Racing Suits used mainly in race pace sets
SNKL	Snorkel
Buoy / PB	Pull-Buoy

Appendix 8 – Example Sessions: Nick, Director of Swimming at ANP Swimming

11th October	2017



Coaches Notes

24th January – AEROBIC POWER	2018

8 => 1000 'SKIPS' [FIRST 400. FINS]

8.30 => 6x50 i) DRILL (70) ii) FRS: B/E 7 (60) iii) FRS: MEN: 34 WOMEN: 35 (50)
2x 100 FRS (1:30) MEN = 68 WOMEN = 70 NEG. SPLIT PADS?

9 8x 50 i) DRILL (70) ii) FRS: B/E 7 (60) iii) FRS: = 33/34 (50)
2x 100 FRS (1:30) = 66/68 NEG. SPLIT PADS?

9.30

=> 300. CHOICE [PREPARE FOR MAIN SET PHYSICALLY + MENTALLY]

10

=> 4x 150 @ BLUE (3:00) [FLY SWIMMERS = FRS]

10.30 18 x 100 (6x 1:40, 6x 1:50, 6x 2:00) No.1

11 → OPTION 1 = 2x CLEAR + 4x 75m @ PURPLE

11.30 OPTION 2 = 6 AS 1x CLEAR 1x PURPLE
6 AS 1x CLEAR 2x PURPLE
6 AS 2x CLEAR 4x PURPLE

12

12.30 => 4x [200 SWIM (3:30 - 3:20 - 3:10 - 3:00) CLEAR
2x 100 (R1) SWIM FINS (1:35) CLEAR (R3) FINS: KICK/SWIM (1:45)
1 (R2) PULL (1:40) FRS/BK (R4) CHOICE (1:20)

1.30 = 6400.

SWIM DOWN MUST BE
2 COMPLETED EFFECTIVELY
AS WE ARE INTO
2.30 ANOTHER TOUGH SET
THURSDAY P.M.

3

3.30

Coaches Notes

13th July	**2018**

8 => 300 Swim (+15)
200 Pull (+15)
8.30 100 BK Cups or Fes Sticks (+30) =1500

9

9.30 => 24x100 [FM = 12]
5x Kick (2:00) Desc 1-5
1x Swim (2:00) Clear

10
5x Kick (1:45) Short Rest
1x Swim (2:00) Clear

10.30
=> 4x 400 Pull (+30) Pads Optional
1 [FM=3] i) 150 Frs @ White/50 Back @ Pink
ii) Back @ White < 3rd 100 Frs @ Clear / 4th 100 BK @ Pink } x2

11.30
=> 200 Swim Down [= 4100/5700]

12

12.30
=> 12x100
5x Kick (2:00) Soft Desc 1-5
2x Swim (2:00/1'45)
4x Kick (1'45) Short Rest
1x Swim @ Clear

1

1.30
=> Fly Tech Filming 6x 50

2
=> 10x150 (+20)
4x 50 Fly Layout / 100 Back @ Clear
2.30
3x Frs: Fists Combo
2x 1st + 5"25. Fly Tech
3 [=4500] 1x Choice → Finger Pads

3.30

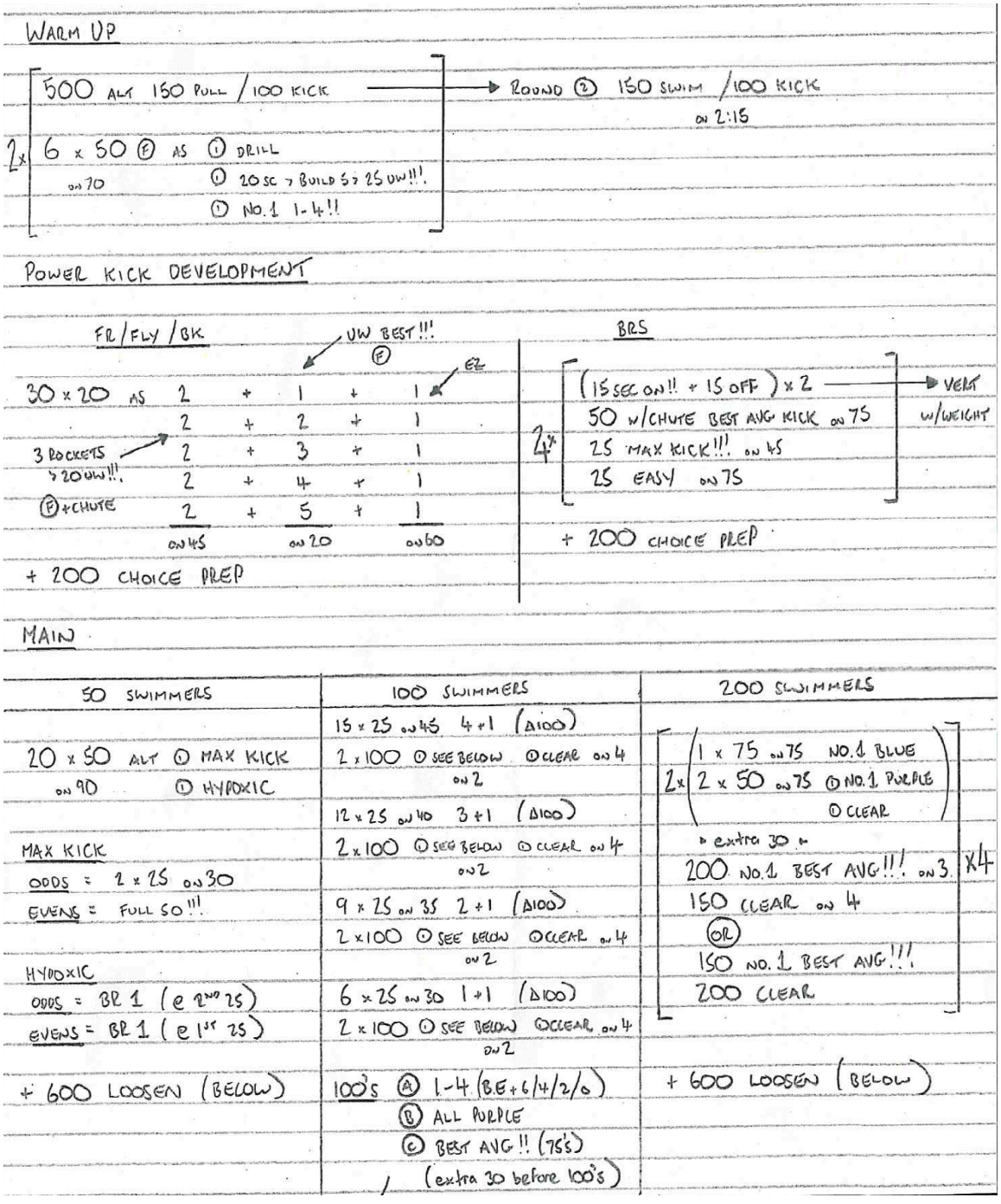
=> 9/7x 400 Frs Swim or Pull + Pads?
Men = 5:20/5:10/5:00 5:10/5:00/4:50 5:00/4:50/4:45
Women = 5:40/5:30/5:20 5:30/5:20/5:10 5:20/5:10/5:00

=> 4/2x 100 Swim Down i) Back iii) Frs/Bk
ii) K-S iv) S-K
[= 5500/4500]

Coaches Notes

Appendix 9 – Example Sessions: Tony, Head Coach at ANP Swimming

ANP SWIMMING	Date 10/10/17	Week 10	AM / **PM** **SC** / LC	Reminders
	Session Content			Primary Focus Secondary Focus



Coaches Notes:	Volume
Loosen: 2x[150 Continuous **[3x50 Drill / DPS / DAB**	

ANP SWIMMING	Date 26/01/2018	Week 22	AM / **PM** SC / **LC**	Reminders
	Session Content Quality (PROD)			Primary Focus Secondary Focus

WARM UP

SUITS

600 CHOICE LOOSEN

6 x 100 ALT ① KICK (NEG) ON 2
① PULL (BRS/FL) ON 1:45
① FR OR IM (1. PINK 1. RED) ON 1:45

12 x 50 ALT ① DRILL (F)
① DIVE 2S
① EZ
① NO 1 1-3!! (TO PACE)

+ 200 CHOICE PREP

MAIN

SPRINT

3/4x [4 x 50 AS ② DIVE 2S T.E.S!! ON 90
② PUSH FASTEST RISS AVG!!!
200 (F) LOOSEN ON 6]

RED 3 SHOULD ALWAYS BE SAME! (BES OR FASTER) ON 90/80/70/60

ANYONE WANT TO TRY A BONUS ROUND ON 50 ??? 12/16

MID-D

4x [6 x 50 ALT ① ON!!! (BANK REST)
① OFF
3 x 100 ALT ① ON!!! ON 2
② CLEAR ON 2/3 (BANK)]

2.4

ON = FASTEST RISS AVG!! (NOT 200 RP)

50's ON 75/70/65/60 (NO EXTRA INTO 100's)

EXTENDED SWIM DOWN

[300 CONTINUOUS ALT FR/BK BY 100
2 x 50 ALT ① S.M.P.D
① S.M.P.T
100 KICK BLAST 10M WALLS]

x1/2/3

REST UP + ENJOY YOUR WEEKEND + GET READY FOR A BIG 2 WEEKS OF WORK COMING UP!

Coaches Notes:	Volume

ANP SWIMMING	Date 20/02/2018	Week 26	AM / **PM** **SC** / LC	Reminders
	Session Content SPEED ENDURANCE			Primary Focus Secondary Focus

"HE WHO IS NOT COURAGEOUS ENOUGH TO TAKE RISKS WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING IN LIFE"

WARM UP

600 (E) AS CHOICE MIXER

6 x 100 ALT ① KICK (BLAST 12½ ODD WALLS)
on 2/1:45 ① PULL (OUTSIDE 25's NO BR)
① SWIM (NEG) → ① WHITE > PINK
1-2 ① WHITE > RED > TURN!

PREP

3x [100 AS 75 DRILL > 50 IS > 25 DPC 1-3!! (F)
4 x 25 AS ① DIVE IS DW!! w/CHUTE
on 45 ① PUSH IS DW!!
① EZ
① PUSH 25 @ Δ100 / DIVE IS/20/25]

+ 100 CHOICE + SUIT UP (QUICK CHANGE)

MAIN

GROUP ①	GROUP ②
10 x 25 ALT ① DIVE T.E.S!!! on 30 ① EZ on 60	3x [3 x (3 x 25 RELAY) r. 30 9 x 25 AS 1 + 1 1 + 2 1 + 3 EZ on 45 PUSH Δ100]
9 x 50 AS 1 + 1 on 60 1 + 2 on 75 TURNS!!! 1 + 3 on 90 EZ PUSH BEST!!!	300 (F) LOOSEN SW/K/SW
400 EZ	PUSH 25's ON 30/35/40 1.8
10 x 25 ALT ① DIVE T.E.S!!! on 30 ① EZ on 60	ADDITIONAL 300 @ END
9 x 50 AS 1 + 1 on 90 1 + 2 on 75 TURNS!!! 1 + 3 on 60 EZ PUSH BEST!!!	4.0 Km
800 EZ	
4.6 km	

Coaches Notes:	Volume

ANP SWIMMING	Date 18/06/2018	Week 46	**AM** / PM **SC** / LC	Reminders
	Session Content			Primary Focus Secondary Focus

WARM UP

8:30 - 10:00 AM

600 ALT 200 SWIM / 100 KICK NO (F)

6 x 50 ON 75 ALT ① DRILL

(F) ① FLAGS > FLIP > 5IN > 10OUT!!.

① 15M PLATINUM!!! (KICK) ⟶ ① PUSH ① DIVE

100 LOOSEN

600 ALT 200 PULL / 100 KICK

6 x 50 ON 75 ALT ① DRILL

(F) ① FLAGS > FLIP > 5IN > 10OUT!!.

① 15M PLATINUM (SWIM) ⟶ ① PUSH ① DIVE

100 LOOSEN

MAIN . CAN BE DONE IN ANY ORDER

STATION ①	STATION ②	STATION ③
4 x 50 ON 40 FR 1 x 100 ON 1:40 BK 2 x 100 ON 80 FR 1 x 100 ON 1:40 BK 1 x 200 ON 2:40 FR 1 x 100 ON 1:40 BK FR WHITE(-) BK WHITE(-)	3x [4 x 25 AS ① DEADSTALT IS!! FREESTYLE ON 45 ① PUSH 20!!! ① EE (EXTRA 7) ① DIVE 25 TES!!, FINS 1 x 100 SWIM LOOSEN] LOOKING AT FASTEST POSS 25 WITH FINS TO ASSIST IN GENERATING SPEED	3x [1 x 75 DRILL 1 x 25 TECH (1-3)] CHOICE KIT / TAKE TIME / FOCUS

SWIM DOWN

200 CHOICE

Coaches Notes:	Volume **4.0 KM**

Appendix 10 – Example Weekly Plan from ANP Swimming (Mid-Distance Group)

Mid Distance	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
	-65	-64	-63	-62	-61	-60	-59
SC or LC	LC	SC		SC		LC	
AM Swim	Desc to Pace + Aerobic Descend	Capillarisation + No.1 Ind Focus		Technique + Race Skills		Aerobic Desc (IM Mix)	
	06:00-08:00	05:30-7:30		06:00-07:30		05:15-06:45	
AM Land	Weights		Weights	Spinning	Weights	TBC	
	10:30-12:00		09:00-10:30	07:50-08:30	10:30-12:00	07:30-08:30	
Approx Vol	5.8	5.4	0.0	4.8	0.0	5.0	0.0
SC or LC	LC	SC	LC	SC	LC		
PM Swim	No.1 Red	Resistance Kick > No.1 Blue/Purple	Aerobic Pull	Aerobic Power	Best Average Kick		
	18:00-20:00	18:00-20:00	12:00-14:00	17:30-20:00	18:00-20:00		
PM Land		Circuit					
		17:15-18:00					
Approx Vol	5.8	5.4	5.8	5.0	5.2	0.0	0.0

Appendix 11 – Colour System Training Classification used at ANP Swimming

Colour	Description	Physiological Measures			RPE	Training Set Labels		Notes
		Heart Rate	*Heart Rate*	*Lactate*		*"Traditional"*	*Olbrecht*	
Clear	Easy, Recovery, Relaxed Swimming	60-80BBM	< 120	< 2 mmol	8	Recovery	Regener-ation	- Easy movements, no training effect. - Typically completed at the start of warm-ups, for recovery during intense sets and in swim down. - Important to maintain stroke technique and efficency throughout.
White	Low level aerobic. Easy to moderate effort with a focus on skill and technique.	50BBM	140-150	< 2.5 mmol	8-10	Aerobic Maintenance	Aerobic Capacity	- High volume, low/moderate intensity with short rest between repeats. - Short rest between repeats. - White and Pink will make a large proportion of weekly training volume especially in general preparation phases. - Use Stroke Count work/targets to increase stroke efficiency. - Add skill objectives within sets to challenge athletes. - Even pacing and negative splitting should be frequently used . - Use as an opportunity to re-enforce technique and to provide frequent feedback to athletes. - Sets will lose effectiveness if stopped or interupted frequently. - Set design for 20-60 minutes total duration. - Too much variation is less effective.
Pink	Aerobic development, moderate effort.	40BBM	150-160	2-4 mmol	10-12	Aerobic Development	Capacity	
Red	Aerobic development, 'Threshold', high aerobic effort.	30BBM	160-170	Around 4 mmol	12-14	Threshold	Aerobic	- High volume, moderate/high intensity with short rest between repeats. - Focus on maintaining skills, technique and efficiency (SC) throughout sets. - Opportunity to use short rest sets within this category.
Blue	Moving above Threshold, very hard.	20BBM	170-190	4-8 mmol	14-18	Heart Rate /Vo2 Max	Capacity	- Moderate/high volume, high intensity, moderate/high rest. - Best Average type sets. - Most effective when completed on main stroke.
Purple	"Best Average" effort, very very hard.	10BBM	190+ bpm	8+ mmol	16-20	Heart Rate /Vo2 Max	Anaerobic	- Focus on maintaining technique and skills under fatigue. - Bigger variation in sets for sprinters. Middle-Distance and Distance with more similarity.
Orange	Fast, cannot swim faster within the demands of the set.	n/a	n/a	6-9 mmol	16-20	Race Pace (200m+)	Aerobic Power	- Moderare volume, high intensity, short/moderate rest. - Important for mid-distance/distance swimmers to prepare for 400m/800m/1500m (200m) events. - Aim to complete repeats with racing stroke rates/counts and with world class skills and technique.
Green	Maximum effort, All-Out, "Best Effort"	n/a	n/a	Maximum (12+ mmol if achieveable)	18-20	Lactate Tolerance/Race Pace (50-200m)	Anaerobic Power	- Moderate/low volume, very high/maximal intensity, long/very long rest. - Sets can at times, be completed in racing suits. - Use of race pace charts/speed tables/race profiles adds to specificity of sets.
Gold	Top end speed, explosive speed and power, HVO's.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Speed/Power	Speed	- Short intervals [10-35m/4-20 secs] with very long periods of rest. - Everything must be completed at maximum speed with no compromise on technique or skill. - Monitoring of Stroke Rates during these types of set would be advantageous. - Important for athletes to be 'fresh' for this type of work to be most effective. - Starts, Turn, Finish and Resisted/Assisted work all very useful ways of training in this zone.